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Rev. Charles Willard Miller.

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1859



OPINIONS CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.

BY THE REV. P. DAVIDSON,

EDINBURGH.

CRITICAL NOTICES OF FIRST EDITION.

"A remarkably able and useful work."—*The Christian Treasury*.

"The strength of this book is its vigorous and independent conception of doctrines, and its penetrating insight into the texture and cohesion of systems. Mr Davidson is an ingenious critic, and a clear expositor; but his *forte* as a theologian lies in the dogmatic region, or, what is almost the same thing, in the polemical. . . . Perhaps the most ingenious and elaborate of these lectures is the first; and the careful student of the gospel history, who has attended to the recent discussion of the great question of the life of Christ, will find Mr Davidson thoroughly at home in it, and able to strike out independent tracks of thought. . . . A more able and lucid statement of the whole mixed state of the Jewish mind respecting Jesus of Nazareth, has not recently appeared in any quarter. The succeeding controversial lectures are equally clear and forcible. . . . Mr Davidson's exposition of the Catholic Opinion is not only luminous, but earnest and lofty, and is marked by a manly eloquence and strength of conviction, with which it is truly grateful to hear the grand old doctrines of the Gospel set forth in an ambiguous and apologetic age."—*United Presbyterian Magazine*.

"This book is quite what the author's friends would have expected—remarkable for acuteness and exactness, and displaying an acquaintance with biblical criticism, and the speculations of the highest class of writers altogether up to the times. He has accordingly furnished us with a volume, which, while it is popular and adapted to ordinary reading, will at the same time well repay the attention of professional students. . . . We should think no person could read the long slashing article on Professor Newman on the moral perfection of Jesus, without forming a very high idea of the talents and attainments of the author."—*The Canadian U. P. Magazine*, conducted by the Rev. Dr Taylor, late of Auchtermuchty.

"Not the least valuable part of the volume is the appendix, extending to upwards of 50 pages, and comprising several able and closely argued notes on some important theological questions of the day. Mr Davidson proves himself to be both a workman and a watchman, diligently teaching the truth and zealously watching against the insidious errors that mar and pervert it."—*Scottish Congregational Magazine*.

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"Though unpretending both in thought and style, there is a good deal in these lectures which indicates a well-furnished mind, and considerable literary skill on the part of their author. This is well shown in the appended notes on Francis Newman and Professor Jowett. The volume deserves to be known beyond the circle of Mr Davidson's congregation and friends."—*North British Review*.

OPINIONS
CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.



OPINIONS

CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.

BY THE

REV. PETER DAVIDSON,
MINISTER OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION OF
DEAN STREET, EDINBURGH.

And this is Life Eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John xvii. 3.

SECOND EDITION.

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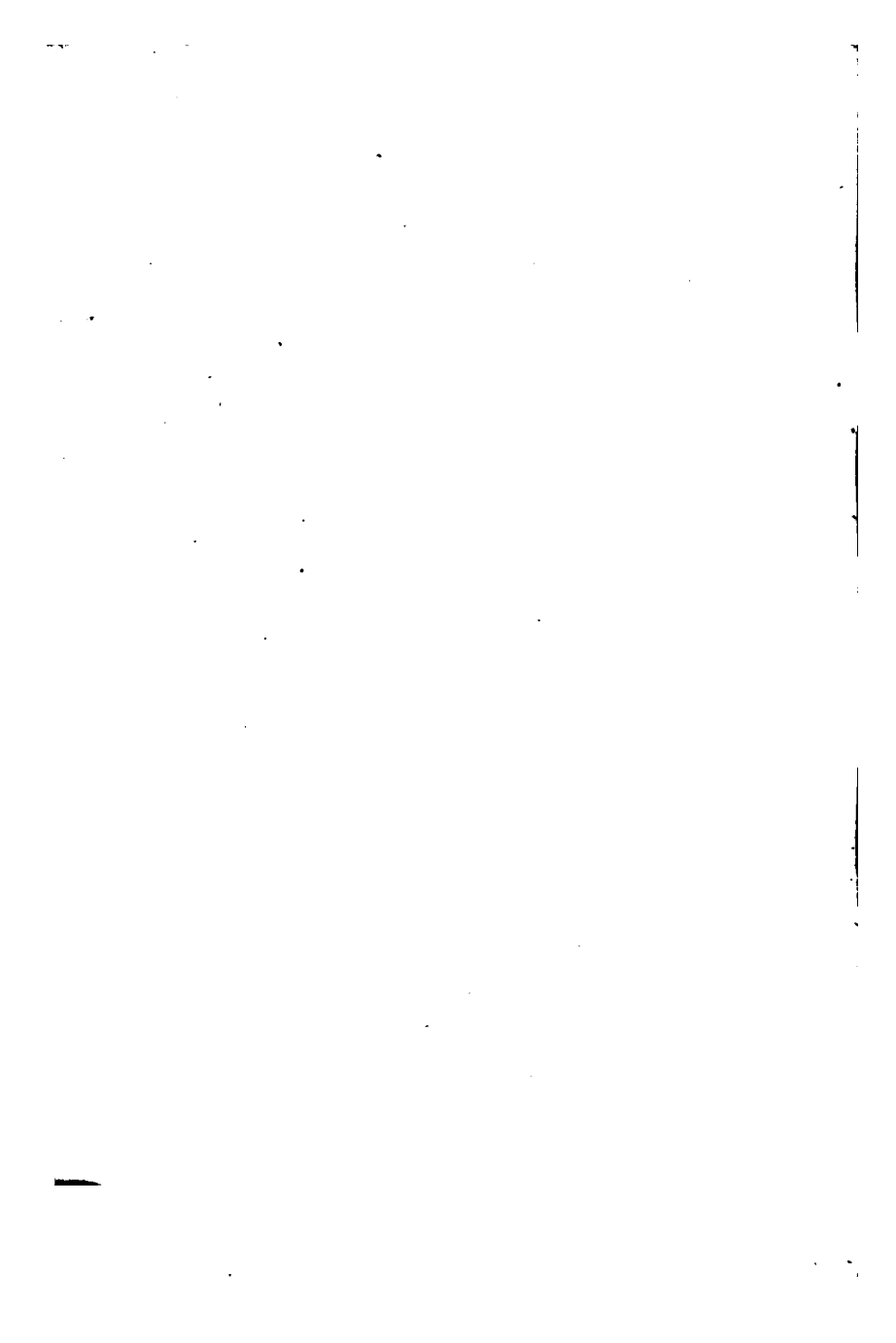
MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

TO THE
REVEREND JOHN BROWN, D.D.,
SENIOR MINISTER OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION,
BROUGHTON PLACE, EDINBURGH,
PROFESSOR OF EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY TO THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

This Volume is Inscribed,
AS A SMALL TRIBUTE OF ADMIRATION OF THE SERVICE WHICH
HE HAS, BY HIS LIFE AND LABOURS, RENDERED
TO THE CAUSE OF DIVINE TRUTH,
AND AS A MEMORIAL OF THIRTY YEARS' UNBROKEN FRIENDSHIP,

BY

The Author.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sketches and discussions (with the exception of the first discourse, which was prepared for a different occasion) were delivered as a series of monthly evening lectures from the author's own pulpit during part of the year 1857. They are now published at the request of the elders and managers of his congregation, as well as of other respected Christian friends who heard them, who were of opinion that they might be useful to the young and to others who had not leisure or opportunity to peruse larger treatises on the same subjects.

But for this, the author would not have deemed himself called upon to publish on themes on which so much has been already published, and on which nothing new, whether in shape or substance, either need or can be

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said. Believing, however, that these themes are unspeakably important—lying at the very foundation of all true and sound Christianity,—and that many, not having the time or means of acquiring such a knowledge of them from other sources as their importance demands, are thus exposed to the danger of having their understandings perverted in regard to them, or their faith shaken, by the sophistries and misrepresentations of the enemies of the gospel,—the author felt that he could not but comply with the request so earnestly and respectfully presented to him. And he is not without hope that, by the blessing of God, his labour may be not altogether in vain, in the way of preserving some young persons from destructive error, confirming the faith of “those who have already believed through grace,” or even, perhaps, recovering some who may have ignorantly or inconsiderately gone astray on the subjects discussed.

The volume makes no pretensions to literary merit, or to any other kind of value than that of being an earnest attempt to condense within small compass, and exhibit in a somewhat popular form, a discussion of the various topics introduced, suitable and sufficient for ordinary Christians. The author’s chief labour has been to avoid unnecessary expansion; and though, from the nature of the subjects and the manner in which the volume originated, it was altogether impossible, on

some points, to avoid recurrence to the same thoughts and scriptures, he trusts that the intelligent reader will easily perceive the progress of the argument, and not be offended by any real and unnecessary repetitions. With the exceptions of a slight change in the form of the sixth discourse, and of some additions in others, where the want of time had precluded fuller statements, the lectures are published almost verbally as they were delivered. This accounts for the direct form of address maintained throughout the volume, which it has not been thought necessary to alter.

It was not the original object of these discourses to follow error into its more recent ramifications and manifestations. Opposition to Divine truth is seldom new, save in shape and circumstance. The establishment of the truth is the most effectual way of counteracting error, whether ancient or modern; and the author has therefore chiefly endeavoured to keep this in view. In the Appendix, however, among other topics discussed, he has given two pretty long notes on what he regards as the two vilest as well as vainest attempts of modern infidelity and heresy:—that of PROFESSOR NEWMAN to disprove the moral perfection of our blessed Lord, and that of PROFESSOR JOWETT, and others, to overturn or mystify the doctrine of His vicarious sacrifice. These, with the doctrine of His true and proper divinity, are the deepest foundations of Christianity,

and it becomes every Christian man and minister of the gospel to "contend earnestly" for them as the very essence of the "faith once delivered unto the saints."

EDINBURGH, *October 1, 1858.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN this edition the only changes made, in the body of the work, consist of a few corrections and the addition of several foot notes. In the Appendix alterations have been admitted into several of the notes, and a considerable addition made to the last of them.

A friendly critic has alleged that there is some resemblance between the sentiments of the last Discourse on "Jesus Christ the Desire of all Nations" and those of Trench's Hulsean Lecture on the same subject. *If it be so*, the author can only say for himself that he has never read that work : indeed, until he saw the above statement, he was not aware that any author had written on the theme.

The interval between this and the date of the former edition of this volume, however short, has been marked and saddened to the author, as well as to many others, by the removal of his revered and beloved friend, the

eminent divine to whom the volume is inscribed,—to whom the author was more indebted for what knowledge of divine truth he possesses, than to any other earthly source. It is now a melancholy satisfaction to him that he had the opportunity of putting this volume into the hand of his dying friend, and of receiving from him (in the last note which he dictated and subscribed) a very warm expression of his desire and hope that it might be successful in the main object in view—that of helping “young and earnest inquirers” after the Truth.

Encouraged by this and by the measure of acceptance it has already met with, the author again entrusts this small contribution to the cause of Christian truth, to the guidance and blessing of “the Spirit of truth” who testifies of Christ, and by whose teaching alone any one can truly say “that Jesus is the Lord.”

EDINBURGH, *January 29, 1859.*

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" O THOU, the God of infinite mercy and compassion, in whose hands are the hearts of the sons of men, look graciously from heaven upon the dark souls of these poor *unbelievers*, and enlighten them with the saving knowledge of the Great mystery of Godliness : let the beams of thy gospel break forth unto them ; and work them to a sound belief in thee their *God, manifested in the flesh*. Fetch home into thy fold all those that belong to thy merciful election ; bring in *the fulness of the Gentiles* ; gather together the outcasts of Israel ; and glorify thyself in completing a world of believers."

Bishop Hall.

Introduction.

" Christ is God, stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of Man."

T. ADAM.

" A personal Deity is the soul of Natural Religion; a personal Saviour—the real living Christ—is the soul of Revealed Religion. How strange that it should not be impossible—how sad that, through a perverted ingenuity, it should not be uncommon, in reference to both of these—to convert that into a veil which was meant to be a revelation."

DR BROWN.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR more than eighteen centuries the minds of the great majority of the civilized portion of the human race have been occupied with the question, *What is to be thought of Jesus Christ?*—Did such a person as Jesus Christ exist? And if he did, Who was he? What was he?—and their religious opinions and practices have turned upon the answer which they have given to this question.

Nor has the question occupied unworthily so much attention, or the answer to it exercised irrationally so much influence. For if Jesus Christ was indeed what the general creed of Christendom holds him to have been—a Divine person in human nature—God manifest in flesh, come to “die for our offences and rise again for our justification,” then, unquestionably, his appearance in our world is the greatest event which ever took place, or can be expected to take place, in it. Nay, it is not too much to say that eternity itself cannot be conceived pregnant with a greater event than this; so that this coming of the Son of God, and the divine

purposes involved in it, must be held to be the central manifestation of the Deity—the cynosure of all religious truth—both for time and for eternity.

But if, on the other hand, this common opinion of Christians concerning Jesus Christ be unsound,—if, either such a person as Jesus Christ never existed, or he was a mere man or a mere creature,—then, certainly, Christianity must be the greatest delusion or imposture which has ever prevailed among men; and those who denounce and oppose it as such, must be regarded as the only friends of truth and the greatest benefactors of their species. They are to be looked up to and honoured as men who, through the power of their understandings or the purity of their hearts, have been able to escape and expose a gigantic falsehood, and, so far at least, discern and defend “the truth.”

It cannot, therefore, be an unprofitable exercise to consider the question which we have announced, and examine some of the different answers which have been given to it. Provided it be entered on in a proper spirit—a candid, humble, and devout spirit—a spirit thirsting for the knowledge of the truth—the exercise must be suitable and profitable to all classes of men. To intelligent and established Christians, for instance, who have already considered the question for themselves, and are able “to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them,” it must be both pleasing and profitable; for, with their views, they can only anticipate from it a further confirmation of their faith and hope. Those again who,

professing to be Christians, have never carefully considered the grounds on which they make this profession, and cannot therefore give a good reason for it, are still more likely, as they more need, to be benefited by this exercise; for it ought, and may by the divine blessing serve, to excite them to earnest reflection and inquiry, and so help them to lay a firmer and more rational basis for their profession. And if any shall go along with us in this inquiry who have been led, whether considerately or inconsiderately, to reject Christianity, or repudiate any part of the catholic Christian faith,—while they cannot possibly be injured by such a review of their opinions as we propose, they may be unspeakably advantaged; they may by the grace of God be brought to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth; they may be induced to seek and obtain “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

“*What think ye of Christ?* is the test
To try both our state and our *scheme*;
We cannot be right in the rest,
Unless we think rightly of Him.”

In conducting this inquiry we shall consider first the opinions concerning Jesus Christ, which were entertained by the Jewish people among whom he appeared; endeavouring, as far as the limits of a single discourse permit, to point out the principal sources of their unbelief. This will not only set before us the main outlines and most prominent points of the whole territory which we propose to survey, but also dispel some

of the mists and darkneses which encompass that territory. Jewish unbelief was but a peculiar and circumstantial manifestation of the inherent depravity and stupidity of human nature. All unbelief springs from the same root—the hatred of truth and of the God of truth. The rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews of his own day sufficiently accounts for the obstinate infidelity of their outcast descendants since, and for the unparalleled history of that singular people. It has also often become a handle to the infidel and a stumbling-block to the believer;¹ so that the consideration of it is, on various accounts, both necessary and proper. But the subject is so extensive and intricate that we can do little more than glance at it, and indicate the principal lines of investigation into which a full consideration would lead. In doing this, we shall proceed on the supposition of the truth of the gospel histories, and indeed, also, of the authenticity of the whole Scriptures. This is both warrantable and unavoidable; for it is from Scripture alone that we have any good evidence that the claims of Jesus Christ were suitably presented to the Jewish nation, and that the nation joined together in rejecting *them* and crucifying *Him*. And it need hardly be added that, so far as this question is concerned, the unbelieving Jews of the present day are

¹ "One of the difficulties with which the minds of some Christians are perplexed, is, that Jesus Christ should have been rejected by the greater part of his countrymen, the Jews; and that they who had been, according to our Scriptures, for so many ages, God's favoured and peculiar people, should be now, and for about seventeen centuries, without a country, and scattered as outcast strangers through the world."—*Whately's Introd. Lessons on Christian Evidences*.

unexceptionable witnesses both of the authority of the Old Testament and the truth of the New; for they approve and defend the conduct of their fathers as recorded in the latter, and still continue to wait for the Messiah promised in the former.

After discussing the unbelief of the Jews of our Lord's day, we propose to return to our own times, and from our own point of view to glance in succession (proceeding backward in point of time, but forward in point of theme) at the Infidel, the Socinian, the Arian, and the Catholic opinions, concerning Jesus Christ. In considering the first of these, the truth of the gospel narratives and the divine origin of Christianity must necessarily come into question; but, in the case of the others, the question will be mainly one of the interpretation of the Scriptures; for Socinians and Arians less or more distinctly allow both the truth and inspiration of the word of God, while the Catholic opinion is entirely and exclusively based on that word. Other opinions concerning Jesus Christ, which were held in primitive times, it is deemed unnecessary or unprofitable to disinter from the deserved oblivion in which, practically, they have long been buried; and this short series of sketches and discussions of *present and past opinions* will be concluded with a recapitulation of what we deem the most attractive glories of the person, and office, and work of Jesus Christ, and at the same time a sort of anticipation of the *future opinion* of universal humanity concerning him, in a discourse on "JESUS CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS."

May "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," accept and bless this humble but earnest attempt to set forth and defend some important parts of the truth concerning His Blessed Son ! May He give to the reader " the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ; that, the eyes of his understanding being enlightened, he may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints !" May He grant to the believing reader, " according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in his heart by faith ; that he, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that he may be filled with all the fulness of God !" " UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH, BY CHRIST JESUS, THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END ! AMEN."

I.

Jewish Opinions.

SAW, and yet *hated* thee? They did not *see*,
They saw *Thee* not, that saw and hated thee :
No, no—they saw not thee, O Life, O Love !
Who saw aught in thee that their hate could move

CRASHAW

✱ Texts.

Mark viii. 27-29. "And Jesus went out and his disciples into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ."

Mat. xxii. 41-46. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, the LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word."

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: The rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews a difficulty—A greater difficulty—Jewish unbelief foretold and overruled. CONSIDERATION I. The Jews disqualified for judging of the claims of Jesus—Prophetic descriptions of the Messiah contrasted with Jewish expectations. CONSIDERATION II. The Jews neglected the signs of the Messiahship of Jesus—Number and variety of these signs, and the manner in which attention was called to them—John the Baptist—Jesus—Opinions concerning him in Galilee: the Royal opinion; the Rabbinical opinion; the Popular opinion; the Apostolical opinion. CONSIDERATION III. Moral condition of the Jewish people, and especially of the priesthood and rulers—Their antipathy to Jesus—The doctrine of his Divinity as brought before the rulers in Jerusalem—The character and conduct of Caiaphas, the high-priest—The sudden change of feeling towards Jesus among the multitude—CONCLUSION.

I.

JEWISH OPINIONS.

THE Jewish nation has been a mystery from its beginning even until now. Not, perhaps, that there was anything peculiar, whether mentally or morally, in the original constitution of the Hebrew race,—but, having been long placed in very peculiar circumstances, that race acquired very peculiar characteristics and has presented very extraordinary results. For nineteen centuries it stood upon a lofty eminence and looked forward with intense desire on a bright and attractive vision—"the hope of Israel." As the time for its realization drew near, this vision, as apprehended by the Jewish mind, became, through a variety of causes, at once so changed in form and so dazzlingly bright, that the Jews were not prepared to recognise their "Glory" when he appeared: and, shutting their eyes to him and to all external light and truth, they have now come down from their lofty station and wandered blindly about the world, for well-nigh nineteen centuries more, still entranced with the attractive, but now deceitful, expectation which had from the beginning engrossed them. The bright vision has become so indelibly impressed on the retina of the national consciousness that

it will not pass away—a sort of internal *ignis fatuus*, so to call it,

“That leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind.”

What we propose in the present discussion is to inquire into the most prominent causes of this extraordinary result, and so endeavour to show that the rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jewish nation is no sound argument against his claims to be the MESSIAH of Old Testament prophecy, and all that either Old Testament or New Testament inspiration proclaims him to be. It is indeed a great “mystery” that this “blindness in part hath happened to Israel,”—that the people chosen to wait for the Messiah and prepare his way—the people to whom he was especially promised and sent, and who had all the means of knowing him when he came,—should have disowned him, blasphemed him, crucified him. At first sight the thing seems almost incredible, and we are tempted to ask, Could Jesus Christ be indeed the Messiah promised to the fathers? But, as has been well remarked, there is a still greater mystery—a still more formidable difficulty, on the other side. If Jesus was THE CHRIST, it is, no doubt, strange that the great body of the Jews should have rejected and crucified him; but if he was not—if he was an impostor—how much stranger still that, along with many myriads of Jews, an almost infinite number of Gentiles, of all tribes and tongues and nations, as well as of all ranks and classes, should have speedily gathered themselves around the standard of the Cross, and believed in and honoured this crucified impostor as “their Lord and their God!” especially, that they should have done this without a motive—in opposition to all their former creeds and superstitions, and all their temporal interests—willingly enduring fiery persecutions, and undergoing

fearful deaths, rather than deny their faith and hope in this crucified impostor! and above all, that this faith in a crucified impostor, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world,—after all possible scrutiny into the truth and its evidence, by the most learned and talented men both of Jewish and Gentile extraction,—should have continued to spread among the most civilized nations of the earth, and be at this hour, more than 1800 years after his crucifixion, threatening to pervade the whole human race!—this, I say, would be a far more strange, a far more unaccountable thing than Jewish unbelief, and would be in truth altogether incredible. The question, then, substantially is, Which of these mysteries is to be received? On which side does the truth lie? Did the Jewish nation reject and crucify the *true* Messiah? Or has the Christian world received and deified a *false* Messiah? We of course affirm the former proposition, and deny the latter; and we propose to point out a few considerations which go to support the affirmation.

Before doing so, it is proper to remark that the rejection of Christ by the Jews was no surprising or unexpected event to the wisdom of God, or to Jesus himself. It had been foretold in the same prophetic Scriptures in which his coming had been promised and all his character and work described: so that the Jews in “crucifying the Lord of Glory” were but doing “what the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done,” and “what God had before showed by the mouth of all his holy prophets.” Let none imagine, then, that there was any mistake or miscalculation, on the part of Divine wisdom, in sending Jesus Christ to the Jewish nation, or choosing that nation for the purpose of receiving him. The reverse was the case. The wisdom of God had not only foreseen the

unbelief of the Jews, but determined so to overrule it as to make it more conducive in the end, to the glory of God and the salvation of men, than their cordial reception of Christ would have been. That unbelief had a place—an important place—in the Divine plan; and the faith of Abraham himself was not more essential to the counsel of God in regard to the incarnation and coming of the Messiah, than the unbelief of Abraham's descendants was to the working out of the great ends and objects of his coming. It is on this subject that the Apostle reasons in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: the wonderful result calling forth the impressive exclamation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"¹—The following considerations, I apprehend, will go far to explain the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish nation.

I.

The vast majority of the Jews had disqualified themselves for forming a just judgment on the claims of Jesus to be the promised Messiah.

The Jews of the time of Jesus Christ were in a worse condition for forming a just judgment as to the person and character of the promised Messiah than even the heathens who had never heard of the Messiah; for they had so perverted or reversed the prophetic descriptions of him and of his work that they had more to unlearn, in order to know him and welcome him, than heathens had to learn. This will be obvious when we compare a

¹ A satisfactory discussion of this point, as well as a most instructive exposition of the apostle John's summary of "the details and results of the public ministry of Jesus Christ," will be found in Dr Brown's "*Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ illustrated*," Vol. ii, Exp. xx. See also his "*Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*," chaps. ix., x., xi.

few of the leading predictions concerning the Messiah with the known expectations of the Jews in regard to him. And let us take for this purpose only such predictions as the Jews themselves understood to refer to him.

We begin with the first promise, the germ of all inspired prophecy and doctrine on the subject. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," said Jehovah to the serpent, "and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."¹ Now, two things are plainly involved in this intimation in regard to the person spoken of as "the woman's seed:"—first, that he was to be a *spiritual* Saviour; and secondly, that he was to be a *suffering* Saviour. The serpent, *the Devil*, was as yet the only enemy our first parents had known or heard of; *sin* was the only evil they felt—sin which had separated them from God, subjected them to his disapprobation and curse, deranged their own moral nature, and rendered them miserable. What then could their ideas of "the woman's seed" be, but that he was to be a deliverer from Satan and sin—a destroyer of the Devil and his works—a *spiritual Saviour*? And though, probably, they could not as yet arrive at any clear or certain knowledge of what was meant by the bruising of "his heel," they could not imagine less than that it indicated some kind or degree of suffering which was to come upon himself, when he was in the act of destroying the destroyer and redeeming his captives.—Now we know that the majority of the Jews in the time of Christ, instead of expecting a spiritual and suffering Messiah, expected one of the very opposite description. Instead of a redeemer from the *spiritual* bondage of Satan and sin, they thought only of a

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

redeemer from the *temporal* bondage of Rome ; and they anticipated that he would accomplish this redemption, and raise the Jewish nation to the highest pitch of prosperity and dominion, not by suffering and dying, but by a glorious career of conquest and triumph. So foreign from all their notions of the Messiah was the idea of his sufferings and death, that we find the disciples of Jesus (though less likely than others to be greatly perverted in their views) utterly unable to comprehend what he meant when he began to speak in the plainest terms of his own death ; and they remained, even to the end of his life, dark, doubtful, and unbelieving on the subject. And as for others, we know that, unable to reconcile the many prophecies concerning the sufferings and death of the Messiah (such as the 22d Psalm and the 53d chapter of Isaiah) with their own perverse conceptions, they either mystified these prophecies, or applied them to the Jewish nation, or invented a double Messiah—one to suffer, and another to reign. How then could they be expected to see their long looked-for deliverer in the “ Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ? ”

Let us take next the promise made to Abraham and to the other patriarchs. In their day God had just begun that scheme of providence by which the Hebrew race was, for many great purposes, to be secluded from the other families of mankind—“ dwelling alone and not reckoned among the nations.” One of these purposes was that they might be the progenitors and expectants of the Messiah ; but lest their peculiar position and privileges should lead them to expect him as a Saviour for *them* alone—a *national* deliverer—God was pleased, in the various forms of the promise made to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to describe him particularly as the source of blessing to *all nations*. “ In

thee, and in thy seed," said the Word of the Lord to them at different times, "shall all the families of the earth be blessed."¹ How distinct this indication of *universality* in the relations and work of the promised Messiah! and how impressive that it should be found in those very oracles by which the descendants of Abraham were set apart and separated from all other peoples! And it is found also, though in another form, in the famous prediction of Jacob concerning "the Shiloh:" "Unto him shall the gathering of the *peoples* (*i.e.*, all nations), be."² Thus Jehovah, very early and very plainly, warned the Old Testament church against a mistake on this point; and the warning was repeated in innumerable instances and forms by all the prophets.—Yet on this very point, more perhaps than on any other, had the Jews of the day of Jesus Christ taken up false and unscriptural notions. They expected the Messiah to be a *national* deliverer and king. They thought of him as a source of blessing—temporal blessing—only to themselves, and as a source of cursing rather than of blessing to all other nations. For they expected that he would raise *them* to the headship of the nations, and make all other tribes and families of mankind their tributaries and slaves—"hewers of wood and drawers of water" to the children of Abraham. Accordingly, one of the most malignant and contemptuous insinuations which the Pharisees threw out against Jesus was contained in the question, "Will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles?"³ as if his being "a light to lighten the Gentiles" was the lowest and most contemptible office which they, in their enmity, could imagine.

¹ Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.

² Gen. xlix. 10.

³ John vii. 35.

Once more : in the days of Moses, Jehovah the King of Israel had now formed his people into a nation. He had redeemed them from oppression ; he had organised them into a kingdom, made a covenant with them, appointed offices of government and worship, and "given them a law in the hand of a mediator." But lest they should imagine that this divinely authorised constitution was intended to be permanent, he gave a new and strikingly corrective view of the office and work of the Messiah. He promised him as a "PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES,"¹ i.e., the author, lawgiver, and mediator of a new order of things—a new dispensation. It was clearly enough intimated also that this new dispensation, instead of being, like the Mosaic, founded on the carnal principles of descent from Abraham and circumcision, was to be founded on the spiritual principles of faith and obedience ; for, said the Divine oracle, "whosoever (even though of the circumcised seed of Abraham) will not hearken to my words, which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him—he shall be destroyed from among the people."² How plain was it from this that the Mosaic system and law were designed, at Messiah's coming, to pass away and be replaced by a new order of things in which there would be "neither Jew nor Greek, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love!"—But how lamentably did the Jews, and especially the Pharisees of gospel times, fail in apprehending this, and the character and work of the Messiah, as connected with it ! They imagined that he was coming to restore and confirm the law of Moses, and that that burdensome and earthly system was to last for ever. Though weaned from heathen idolatry, they had now turned the temple and the law into idols,

¹ Deut. xviii. 15-19.² Deut. xviii. 19 ; Acts iii. 23.

—even to speak of *their* abolition was, in Jewish estimation, blasphemy,—and any one, whatever might be his character and works, who was thought to aim at that abolition, instead of being believed in as the Messiah, was sure to be regarded and hated as worse than a heathen or a publican.

But time would fail me, were I to go over, even in this summary way, all the leading characteristics of the promised Messiah, and show how utterly the Jews of the day of Jesus Christ had either misapprehended or forgotten or perverted them. In the Psalms and Prophets you have him set forth as a righteous and peaceful king—"just and having salvation, speaking peace to the heathen," and laying the foundation of a universal empire of "truth and meekness and righteousness;"¹ but the Jews expected him to be a blood-stained warrior and conqueror. He is described as a self-sacrificing, yet ever-living and exalted High-Priest—"a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek"—who should "make his soul an offering for sin," and "be cut off, but not for himself;"² but the Jews seem to have had no idea of any other priesthood than that of Aaron, or any other sacrifices than those of slain beasts. And, in a word, to pass over all the other leading characteristics of the predicted Messiah, he was described as GOD-MAN—at once "the Son and Lord of David,"—the "child born and son given," yet the "Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God,"—"a worm and no man," yet the "man who was Jehovah's Fellow,"—"Immanuel:"³ but the great body of the Jews of the day of Christ seem to have been altogether ignorant of this truth in regard to him. Of this ignorance I shall have occasion to speak more pointedly

¹ Ps. xlv.; lxxii.; cx.; Isa. xl.; xlii.; Zech. ix. 9-11.

² Ps. xxii.; xl.; cx.; Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 24-27.

³ Ps. xxii. 6; cx. 1; Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6; Zech. xiii. 7.

afterwards. At present I only remark that,—while the Jews' notions concerning Messiah's person seem to have been exceedingly vague and exceedingly various,—few or none of them appear to have expected him as a Divine person in human nature. Some seem to have imagined that he would be an immortal man;¹ others perhaps expected that he would be of superhuman origin and nature;² but few, if any, had comprehended the truth so frequently and plainly contained in Old Testament inspiration that he would be GOD-MAN. Even the disciples, though they had previously confessed Jesus to be "the Christ the Son of God," do not appear to have properly understood or believed the doctrine of his supreme divinity, till the last night of his life;³ and this may safely be regarded as sufficient evidence that it was not a common idea among the Jews of the time, that the promised Messiah was to be a Divine person in human nature.

Now, when we consider these things, how certain and obvious is it that these Jews were incapable of forming a sound judgment as to the claims of Jesus Christ to be the Messiah! They had made themselves incapable. They had utterly perverted or lost the true idea of the Messiah; and, so far as that idea was necessary to their recognising him when he appeared, they had made that recognition impossible. For they had altered every important characteristic—they had defaced every prominent feature—of the "Hope of Israel." They had taken, so to speak, the divinely-drawn, prophetic portraiture of the "Desire of all nations," and daubed over it, in coarse but glaring colours, a fancy picture of their own, as unlike the original—nay, as opposite to it—as the thoughts of corrupt man are to those of the holy Lord God: and

¹ John xii. 34.² John vii. 27.³ John xvi. 29-31.

how, then, could they from that daub know the person of whom the original was the likeness? It is plain they could not know him. So long as they retained their own views, they could not but reject the true Messiah. Had they on the ground of these views believed in Jesus of Nazareth, that would have been sufficient proof that Jesus of Nazareth was not the *true*, but a "*false Christ*." And so far, therefore, their rejection of Jesus is a proof that he was the true Messiah—God's Messiah. "I am come," said he, "in my Father's name; and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." O how true a saying was this! and equally true was that other saying, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also."¹

II.

The Jews of the time of Jesus Christ gave no adequate attention to the signs of Messiah's coming.

Besides the prophetic characteristics of the promised Messiah which we have been considering, there were many other predictions concerning him which contained what may be styled the "signs of his coming," or pointed out the external and visible marks by which he was to be recognised. Adequate attention to these predictions and their fulfilment in Jesus would have enabled the Jews to know him; for it would have constrained them to change their erroneous views, and give up their unfounded prejudices, in regard to the Messiah. And it was doubtless in this way that the fishermen of Galilee and others—blind beggars and despised publicans and sinners—though they had at first entertained the same views of the Messiah as the Scribes and Pharisees, were, by the grace of God, enabled to lay

¹ John v. 43; viii. 19.

aside their prejudices and believe in Jesus. These signs were very numerous, and were *cumulative* in their character. They began with the birth of Jesus and increased in number and clearness as he advanced, till, by the time of his death and resurrection, they became absolutely innumerable and irresistible. Let us notice a few of these signs, and the manner in which the body of the Jewish people treated them.

Three or four conspiring fulfilments of prophecy may be said to have pointed out the new-born Saviour in his manger-bed. These were the line of his descent, the time of his appearance, the place of his birth, and the fact of his miraculous conception; for all these had been distinctly foretold,¹—the predictions were well known at the time,—and all were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Nor were there wanting abundant means of turning the attention of the Jewish people to these fulfilments of prophecy, and thus enabling them to identify Jesus as the Christ from his very birth. The prodigies which attended that event were not, properly speaking, proofs of his Messiahship, save to the few who saw and understood them; but they were most suitable and impressive means of calling the attention of all classes to the babe of Bethlehem, and the fulfilment of prophecy in him: and it is worthy of notice that these prodigies were first brought to the notice of three different classes of the Jewish people, and these the three classes most directly and immediately interested in the birth of the Messiah. The shepherds of Bethlehem reported what they had seen and heard concerning the child Jesus to the inhabitants of that town, and to the descendants of the house of David then assembled there. Simeon and Anna, a few weeks after, under the influence of the

¹ Gen. xlix. 10; Dan. ix. 25; Hag. ii. 7, 9; Micah v. 2, 3; Isa. vii. 14-16, etc.

spirit of prophecy, spoke of him "to all them who looked for redemption in Jerusalem." And a few weeks or months later, Herod the king, the Scribes and Pharisees, and all the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, were excited by the tidings of his birth brought by "the wise men from the east."¹ How wonderfully did God thus summon the attention of all, and especially of these three classes, to the birth of his Son, and give them an opportunity of knowing him and believing in him from the very first! But with what result? We read of none, save the murder of the infants of Bethlehem by Herod: a fearfully condemnatory result, for it shows that the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus—nay, only part of that evidence as then existing,—was sufficient to arouse a jealous tyrant, and lead him to tremble; and surely the whole of it, therefore, had it been attended to, must have been sufficient to lead others to believe.

After the lapse of twelve years, another call was addressed to the Jewish people to attend to the character and history of the child Jesus, and inquire who and what he was: and, in this case too, it was first addressed to a special class,—the class which of all others had the best opportunity of making him known to the whole nation. For when, in the temple, he astonished "the doctors, the masters of Israel," by his "understanding and answers," a motive was supplied to these learned men, and an obligation laid on them, to search out the antecedents of this wonderful child; and had they been devout lovers of truth, "waiting for the consolation of Israel," they would have done so, and, when convinced themselves, would have proclaimed to all classes that "Jesus was the Christ." Again, however, no discernible result followed this call.

Eighteen years more passed away, and the incarnate

¹ Luke ii. 8-20, 25-38; Matt. ii. 1-10.

Son of God remained almost entirely unnoticed and unknown. Most of the few whose attention had been attracted to him at the time of his birth having now doubtless passed away, it cannot certainly be gathered from the gospels that, at this time, any but his own mother had any suitable knowledge of him, or faith in him. He was "growing up before men as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, and, when seen, no beauty that they should desire him." But now God's time for effectually arousing the attention of all classes to his character and claims, and compelling them either to receive or reject him, was fully come. The loud voice of John the Baptist was heard, in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming his approach and commanding to "prepare his way." The singular character of John, the strange place of his ministry, and even the oddity of his food and raiment, had more effect on that "untoward generation" than the voices of all the prophets who had gone before him. In this respect, as well as others, he was "the greatest of the prophets," the greatest of woman-born. No man, perhaps, ever produced so wonderful a change in so short a time. The sleeping, dreaming, dead nation was thoroughly awakened, "from Dan to Beersheba." All classes and conditions of men from the king to the beggar—Pharisees and Sadducees, priests and soldiers, publicans and harlots—were electrified, and rushed to the wilderness and the banks of the Jordan to see and hear the new prophet; and when there, they were constrained by an influence which could not be resisted, to acknowledge his power and submit to his baptism. John's ministry was not, properly speaking, *evidential*; "for John did no miracle;" it was simply *awakening*, being intended to arrest the attention of the Jews on the

evidences about to be furnished *in* and *by* Jesus himself. "John came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."¹ So far, therefore, John's ministry was perfectly successful. It aroused "all men" to reason, and "muse in their hearts" concerning the Messiah;² and it was "fulfilled,"—it had served its end, and was finished,—as soon as John had enjoyed sufficient opportunity of turning away the roused attention of the people from himself to Jesus, and proclaiming to the representatives of all classes of them, "THIS IS HE;—I am not the Christ, but there standeth one among you whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose;"—nay, pointing to him "as he walked," and saying, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD! THIS IS THE SON OF GOD!"³

It is scarcely possible to conceive of any way by which the attention of the Jewish people could have been more powerfully, or in more favourable circumstances, called to the consideration of the evidences of the Messiahship of Jesus, than that by which it was thus called through the ministry of John the Baptist: and it is altogether impossible to imagine any kind or amount of evidence better fitted to convince them of that Messiahship, than that which, according to the gospels, was set before them in the life, and character, and doctrine, and miracles of Jesus himself. I do not detain you with any exposition of that evidence. With the gospels in your hands, you have it all before you. I only remark that, after all that Jews or infidels have said, or can say, on the subject, there was, *if the gospels be true*, in the features of the character of Jesus, in the

¹ John i. 7.² Luke iii. 15.³ John i. 19-34.

events of his history, in his doctrine and manner of teaching, and, above all, in his miracles—(all of which things, beside the direct proof which they afforded, were the fulfilments of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah)—such an array of appropriate and impressive evidence—worthy of God and suitable to men—that every rational mind that gave any adequate attention to it, and was not under the power of some predominating, infatuating prejudice, *must* have been convinced by it. I repeat that, if the gospels be true (and I say this simply because in this discourse we do not enter into that question, but take it for granted), every Jew, whose mind was not irrationally turned away from the evidence, or blinded to its power by some predominating and infatuating prejudice, *must* necessarily have been convinced by it that “Jesus was the Christ.”

And what then was the result? I answer: We have a striking and instructive specimen of the result, relating to Galilee, in one of the passages set at the head of this discourse. Let us glance at it for a little. —The third and last year of our Lord’s ministry was now passing. Not much more than half a year of his course remained. By far the larger part of the time past had been spent by him in Galilee, and his public ministry there was now completed. Soon he was to leave it for the last time in his life, and go up to Jerusalem to die. Before leaving it, however, he led his disciples into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, among the roots of Lebanon, that he might there reveal his glory to them on the mountain of his transfiguration, and so prepare them for what was coming. “By the way,” not for his own information, but for their benefit, “he asked them, Whom do men say that I am? and they answering said, *John the Baptist*; but some say, *Elias*; and others, *One of the prophets*.

And he said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answering said unto him, *Thou art the Christ.*" So that in Galilee, it would appear, none save the apostles had come to the conclusion, from all the evidence submitted to them, that Jesus was the Christ; or if there were others, they were so few and undistinguished individuals, that the disciples did not think them worthy of being mentioned. How strange and lamentable a fact!—But this is not all we learn from this passage and others which record the same lamentable fact.¹ We have here four different opinions concerning Jesus stated, which may be described with sufficient accuracy, but chiefly for convenience' sake, as the Royal opinion, the Rabbinical opinion, the Popular opinion, and the Apostolical opinion. Let us examine and compare them for a little.

First, we have the *Royal opinion* about Jesus, "that he was John the Baptist, risen from the dead." I call it royal, because it was originated or adopted by Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, and because he proclaimed it to his servants as that which he favoured, and which, doubtless, he wished them to circulate and support. It was a strange opinion, not only on account of the connection which Herod had before had with John the Baptist, having first favoured John, and then treacherously murdered him; not only on account of the fact that Herod, as we have reason to believe, was a Sadducee,² who said "that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit;" but especially on account of the absurdity of the opinion itself, and the ease with which it could be refuted. It is difficult to find terms to characterise the folly of such an opinion, and the stupidity, or perhaps rather the duplicity, of the monarch who entertained it.

¹ Mark vi. 14-16; Matt. xiv. 1, 2; xvi. 13-17; Luke ix. 7-9, 18-20.

² Comp. Matt. xvi. 6 with Mark viii. 15.

For reflect: there was not a villager in Nazareth, or a beggar in Capernaum, who could not have exposed the credulity and folly of his king in this matter; for he could have told him that he had seen and known Jesus long before John was beheaded. Doubtless, there was many a poor soldier in Herod's army and many a despised publican in his dominions, who could have certified, if not convinced Herod, that Jesus had been seen with John at Jordan, that he had been baptised by John, and that this was he of whom John had testified, "This is the Son of God." At all events, there was one person in Herod's own court,—“Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward,”—who could have told him all this, and added, that Jesus had not been raised from the dead, but born in Bethlehem, and that his mother was still alive, and in Galilee, ready to attest his birth. But it is needless to enlarge on this most unfounded and grotesque imagination of Herod, and of his servants and flatterers. No doubt some purpose, politically or personally agreeable to Herod, was to be served by its circulation among the people, and (as has been too common, alas! with kings) it was of no moment to him, in that case, whether it was true or false. It served the day and hour, and that was all he cared for.¹

Next, we have the *Rabbinical opinion*, “that Jesus was Elias.” We call it rabbinical, because it seems to

¹ On the supposition that Herod seriously entertained the notion that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, it might be a curious question in psychology, By what process of mind was he led to adopt it? Whether was it that the power of a condemning conscience and a diseased imagination, preparing for him augmented retribution, *fascinated* him into the opinion? Or, was it, on the other hand, that his guilty conscience would be somewhat pacified, and his heart eased, by the thought that his treacherous deed had been undone—the ghastly aspect of the bloody head on the charger, which haunted his imagination, being transformed by it into the living, fervid countenance of the bold preacher on the banks of the Jordan? But though curious, such a question would be unprofitable, because, we suspect, without a sound foundation.

have been favoured by the Scribes and Pharisees,¹ and because the Jewish expectation of the personal return of Elias from heaven was a mere fancy of the rabbis, founded on a perversion of prophecy, and forming a part of their traditionary lore. This opinion was also well-fitted to serve the ordinary ends of the Scribes and Pharisees in reference to Jesus,—that of preventing the common people from believing on him or confessing him. It accounted so far for his divine wisdom, and authority, and works, but implied that a greater than he was still to be looked for, and waited for. But however this notion may have arisen or been supported, it was, though less extravagantly absurd than the former, no less obviously unfounded and false. Elias (or Elijah) had gone to heaven *bodily*; and Jesus, had he been Elias, must have come from heaven in the same sense, which, any man who liked to inquire might easily ascertain, he had not done. Nay, many of the Galileans, and among them doubtless many of the Scribes and Pharisees, already knew well enough that Jesus had not thus come from heaven, and they were ready enough also, when it suited their purpose, both to “murmur at him” for saying that *in any sense* he had come from heaven, and to mention with contempt the meanness of his well-known origin and connections. It was in Galilee that it was said of him, “Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?” And it was at Nazareth in Galilee that it was said, still more contemptuously, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?”² No doubt of it! And therefore he

Comp. Mark ix. 11–13 with John i. 19–25.

² John vi. 42; Mark vi. 3.

could not be Elias; nor could any sane man think so, who knew anything about his history, or made the slightest inquiry into it, or allowed himself to reflect on the subject. The probability is that this opinion, like the former, was a mere pretence intended to mislead, and that those who originated it would be the first to laugh, in secret, at the credulity of those who believed it.

We come to the *Popular opinion* about Jesus, "that he was a prophet, or one of the prophets." That this was the popular opinion, we need not seek to prove—that being repeatedly asserted in the gospels. It has also the common features of popular opinions in religion, namely, that it had some truth in it; that it was vague and variable; and that, when defined, it ran into superstition and absurdity. It had a measure of truth; for Jesus *was* a prophet—a divine messenger. It was variable; for it existed in three different forms: the simple and vague form—"that he was a prophet;" the more definite but obviously false form—"that he was like one of the (old) prophets;" and the grossly absurd and superstitious form—"that he was Jeremias or one of the prophets," risen from the dead.¹ Much might have been said of this opinion as illustrative of the easy credulity of the multitude in religious matters; and also of the manner in which religious opinions and rumours, in passing from mouth to mouth, change and become mingled with superstition. But it is sufficient for our purpose to remark that, while in its simplest form it had a measure of truth in it, it did not contain all the truth; and that it condemned those who entertained it, for not believing this prophet—"this teacher sent from God"—when he plainly enough, and in many ways, proclaimed himself to be *the Christ*. They held him to be a messenger from God, and yet refused to listen to, or

¹ Comp. Matt. xvi, 14 and Mark vi, 15.

receive, the message which he brought. True, the people of Galilee seem, at times, to have believed in the Messiahship of Jesus, and been on the point of acknowledging him. But it was only when they imagined that he would consent to be the kind of Messiah they expected and desired—an earthly king. Five thousand of them, assembled in the wilderness of Bethsaida, said of him, on one occasion, "This is of a truth that Prophet (the Messiah) that should come into the world." But because he would not be "hurried away" to be made a king, and because he told them "hard sayings" which they "could not hear," or did not relish, the very next day they changed their minds about him, and "went back, and walked no more with him."¹ Thus they were plainly moved and led, not by evidence, or truth, or reason, but by a mixture of prejudice, and superstition, and worldliness.

Of the *Apostolical opinion* concerning Jesus—"that he was the Christ"—it is hardly necessary to say anything, save that it is plainly the only one of the four which was in any degree founded on evidence. Originally, the apostles of Jesus had entertained the same views of the promised Messiah as the great majority of their countrymen; they had been under the same prejudices; and it was evidently with great reluctance and very slowly that they were brought to quit these views, or cast off these prejudices. This process was not completed in them till the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. But being at the same time simple-hearted and honest men—having been attracted to Jesus by the testimony of John, and having been persuaded to follow him—they were in a manner compelled to attend to the evidences of his Messiahship, and believe them. They saw the fulfilment of prophecy

¹ John vi. 14, 15, 60-66.

in him. Some of them had doubtless witnessed the heavenly sign, and heard the heavenly voice, at his baptism. They were intimately acquainted with his holy character. They felt the power of his doctrine—that he had “the words of eternal life;” and they had the advantage of having his “dark sayings” explained to them in private. They saw the reality and glory of his miracles—miracles continually accumulating in number and power, and all, such as were predicted of the Messiah and were worthy of his office and dignity—all, in fact, illustrations as well as attestations of that spiritual salvation—that deliverance from Satan and sin—which was the true theme of prophecy from the beginning. Above all, the apostles witnessed and felt the divine power of Christ in searching men’s hearts, reading their inmost thoughts, and making it evident that he “knew what was in man—knew all men and all things.”¹ And how then could they but believe what he taught them? and when in many various ways he taught them, and permitted them to believe, that he was “the Christ,” how could they help holding this to be “the very truth most sure?” They would have been irrational—they would have been insane—they would have been, in their circumstances, a hundred-fold more desperately prejudiced and infatuated than the majority of their countrymen, had they not believed and confessed “that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.” Afterwards, the apostles had still more glorious evidence of this truth. Some of them had it immediately afterwards in his transfiguration; and all of them, and all his disciples, had it, soon afterwards, in his resurrection and ascension, and in all the gifts and powers of his Spirit. But I speak, now, only of the time when Peter, answering the question of Jesus, said, “Thou art the Christ.”

¹ John ii. 24, 25; xvi. 30.

Such then were the four opinions which were entertained concerning Jesus Christ in Galilee, at the close of his public ministry there : and what do they teach us ? Plainly that, if the gospels be true, his miracles and the other credentials of his divine mission were *real and undeniable*. All these opinions accredit him as a *true prophet*—a real messenger from God ; none of them even approximate to the idea, or indicate that a suspicion existed among the inhabitants of Galilee, that he was a deceiver—an impostor. It was left to the more cunning and unscrupulous priests and rulers in Jerusalem to endeavour to fasten that charge upon him.—But at the same time, the first three of these Galilean opinions indicate, in those who entertained or expressed them, great inattention to the evidence which was submitted to them, and the absence of all regard for truth. Political craft and rabbinical conceits, along with popular ignorance, prejudice, superstition, and worldliness, are seen overruling evidence, over-riding conviction, and holding the minds and consciences of the Jews in chains of darkness. And thus truth was sacrificed, opportunity lost, privilege despised, and tremendous guilt incurred. “ Woe unto thee Chorazin ! Woe unto thee Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell : for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.”¹ It was only in the few, poor, simple-

¹ Matt. xi. 21-24.

minded, and sincere-hearted disciples and followers of Jesus, in Galilee, that truth and evidence had, by the special grace of God, exercised their appropriate influence; and over them, therefore, as the beginnings of his spiritual and universal kingdom, Jesus rejoiced. For even "in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him."¹

III.

Religion and morals among the Jews, and especially among the priests and rulers, at the time of Jesus Christ, were extremely corrupt.

In accounting for the rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jewish people, it is necessary to keep in view the extremely corrupt state of religion and morals among them at the time; and especially the morally degraded character of the priests and rulers—their covetousness and hypocrisy, their fearful profanation of sacred things, their ignorance of God, and their instinctive antipathy to Jesus, as soon as they saw him and had any knowledge of his person and character and proceedings. I can throw out only a few hints on these topics; and in doing so I shall keep in eye, mainly, the character and conduct of the priests and rulers in Jerusalem.

We have seen that the Jews generally entertained most false and unscriptural views concerning the expected Messiah, which disqualified them from forming a sound judgment concerning Jesus; and that their

¹ Matt. x. 25-27; Luke x. 21, 22.

neglect of the evidence—"the signs of Messiah's coming"—prevented them from having these views corrected. But it may be asked, How *could* they so entirely neglect or resist such evidence? If the miracles and other credentials of Jesus Christ were so numerous, so public, so unquestionable and convincing, as the gospels represent them,—how *could* any rational being either turn away from them, or prevent them from having their natural and designed effect upon his mind and heart and conscience? How could he be able to reject a divine messenger—the Messiah—so authenticated? This question has often, virtually at least, been asked; and various answers have been returned to it. It has been said that the Jews were judicially blinded, or hardened. And this is true: for it is expressly intimated in Scripture.¹ But it is not a sufficient answer to our question: for all that is implied in judicial blindness or "obduration," as has been remarked, is that God "withholds from the man, who obstinately goes on in his trespasses, that special influence which is necessary" and also effectual both for conviction and conversion—"an influence which nothing but depravity renders necessary, and to which of course no one has, or can have, any claim. He permits the sinner to take his own course. He says, 'He is joined to his idols, let him alone.'"² But what our question demands is the positive, active principle, *in the Jews themselves*, which could have such an effect.

Some learned men have alleged that the Jews were thus blinded or hardened by their belief of "the agency of demons in the production of supernatural effects," by which they were led to ascribe the miracles of Jesus to the power of the Devil. This allegation, were it supported by sufficient evidence, would no doubt go so far to account for the unbelief of the Jews; but no evi-

¹ John xii. 37-41.

² Brown's *Disc. and Say. of our Lord*: Exp. 20.

dence has been adduced in its support, and I confess that to me it appears altogether unsatisfactory.¹ I cannot conceive how sane men could seriously persuade themselves that the manifold pure, benignant, and merciful miracles of Jesus, all tending to overthrow the kingdom of the Devil, were yet "the works of the Devil." They might in wrath, or in hypocrisy, so *speak* of them; but that, in their hearts and consciences, they so *thought* of them, I cannot imagine. If they did, most certainly they must have been a nation either of maniacs, or of worse than Manichees—either literally insane, or so corrupt in heart, that to them God and the Devil had virtually changed places—God had become their *Devil*, and the Devil had become their *God*. They must have "called (knowingly called) evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness"—nay, formed the Devil's own choice,

"Evil be thou my Good."

But if this, or anything like it, was their moral condition, we have no need, in accounting for their unbelief, to have recourse to any speculative opinion they might hold about the agency of demons in working miracles; for this corruption of heart is abundantly sufficient to account for it. It will explain both their inattention to the miracles of Jesus, and their enmity against himself. They might, like Pharaoh, see *them* to be "the finger of God," and yet neglect or resist them; they might, in their hearts and consciences, know *Him* to be "a teacher come from God," and yet reject and crucify him. And this, I am inclined to think, was not far from being the simple truth in regard to many of them, and especially in regard to the priests and rulers—the scribes and pharisees, in Jerusalem.

In endeavouring to form a sound judgment of *their*

¹ See Appendix, Note I.

opinions concerning Jesus, and their treatment of him, one thing to be kept in mind is that they were very attentive to the signs of Messiah's coming till Jesus actually appeared among them. They were generally expecting him; they knew that the time of his appearance was come; they eagerly questioned John the Baptist on the subject, and seemed impatient of delay.¹ But no sooner did Jesus appear with all the external signs, but none of the expected characters, of *their* Messiah, than immediately, as if instinctively, a strong antipathy to him sprung up in their hearts which, however for a time veiled, could not be concealed. I do not stay to inquire into the origin of this antipathy; Jesus himself afterwards identified it with their hatred to his Father; but I merely call attention to the fact that, however caused, it existed from the beginning of their personal knowledge of him, and that it grew and strengthened as that knowledge increased. There may indeed be said to have been from the very first a mutual antipathy between him and them; and *their* hatred was greatly augmented and envenomed by *his* words and conduct towards them. For from the outset of his ministry he set himself in direct and unmistakable antagonism to their principles, and interests, and covetous practices. At his first passover, when he purified the temple and said, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise," he plainly showed in what estimation he was disposed to hold the priests and rulers themselves, as well as the profane usages which, for the sake of gain, they had tolerated or introduced. And this was but the first flash of that self-consuming zeal for his Father's house and honour

¹ John i. 19-28; Luke iii. 15: The Pharisees who were sent as a deputation from the Sanhedrim to question John, were evidently pleased with his account of himself as the forerunner of the Messiah, and therefore did not forbid him to baptize.

which dwelt in his bosom and was ever ready to burst forth, with withering effect, when he came into near contact with these hypocrites. He exposed their hypocrisy; he laid bare their secret villany; he denounced their rapacity and covetousness. He spoke of them, in their official capacity, as hireling-shepherds "who cared not for the sheep,"—nay, as "thieves and robbers" who had not entered "by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbed up some other way," and had come "but to steal, and to kill, and destroy."¹ He characterised them also as liars, and murderers, the children of the Devil and the heirs of wrath—"a generation of vipers who could not escape the damnation of hell."² O what must have been the moral condition—the corruption of heart—of religious men of whom the meek and gentle Saviour, "the faithful and true Witness," gave publicly, and in their own hearing, such descriptions! And it is perfectly evident that just the more bitter and implacable, by reason of this corruption and the truth of these representations, must have been the hatred of these men to Jesus. Need we be surprised, then, that his miracles and all the other signs of his Messiahship produced no salutary effect on them? Need we wonder that hating him from the first—and that hatred still growing—they could either turn away their eyes from these signs, or see them without feeling and acknowledging their power? nay that, ultimately, when they saw or heard of the grandest of them, they could acknowledge their reality and power to each other, and yet only be influenced by them to blaspheme his character and plot his destruction?³ It would have been more than a miracle—a

¹ John x. 1-18. There can be no doubt, I think, that Jesus in this passage contrasted the Jewish rulers—the Sanhedrim, with himself as the Messiah—the true Shepherd or King of Israel.

² John viii. 44; Mat. xxiii. 33.

³ John ix. 15-24; xi. 45-54.

moral impossibility—for these men, with such hearts, and left of God to themselves, to accept and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. As soon might darkness have transformed itself to light, or hellish malignity melted away, of its own accord, to heavenly love!

Another thing which, in this investigation, is to be remembered, is the precise form in which the question of the Messiahship of Jesus was brought before the minds and pressed upon the attention of the priests and rulers in Jerusalem. In Galilee, Jesus appears to have said little in public about his own divinity. Doubtless he had good reasons for this; but whatever these might be, so it was. It would be difficult to find a single instance in which, in Galilee, he either explicitly proclaimed that doctrine, or plainly argued on the ground of it. But how differently did he act in Jerusalem!¹ Besides that John the Baptist had so openly proclaimed the divinity of the coming Messiah in the wilderness of Judea, Jesus himself began to announce it from the very outset of his ministry in Jerusalem. Almost his first recorded words there—"Destroy this *temple*, and in three days I will raise it up" (words well remembered by his enemies, and used against him in various ways, both at his trial and crucifixion)—were an enigmatical but distinct claim to be regarded as a Divine person: "He spake of the temple of his body"—i.e. the residence of his divinity;² and almost every subsequent discourse, recorded in John's Gospel, as delivered publicly by

¹ It is worthy of notice, as an illustration of this difference, that in Galilee, when Jesus vindicated his working of miracles, etc., on the Sabbath-day, he did so by the example of *men*: "What David did," and what his hearers themselves were in the habit of doing (Mat. xii. 1-13). But in Jerusalem, he vindicated the same thing, by the example of *God*: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). There was no incongruity in this, for he was both God and man.

² John ii. 19-22; Mark xiv. 58; xv. 29.

Jesus in Jerusalem, either expressly proclaims or distinctly implies the same doctrine:¹—so that the question submitted to the Jews of Jerusalem, and especially to the rulers there, was not the simple one, Whether Jesus was the Messiah? but the complex one, Whether Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God—a Divine person, the equal of the Father?

It has been much disputed whether the Jews of the day of Jesus Christ expected a divine, or merely human Messiah. Into this dispute I do not think it necessary to enter. The probability seems to be that Jewish sentiment on the point was far from being in a settled state. It was vague, and various, and even self-contradictory. Judging from the gospels, it appears obvious that the Pharisees, whom the great mass of the people followed, did not expect a divine Messiah. Hence their perplexity and silence when Jesus put to them one of the questions placed at the head of this discussion: "If David call him Lord, how is he his son?" Individuals among them, or of other Jewish sects, less under the power of prejudice or more intelligent in the Scriptures, may have attained the knowledge of the truth; but, in accordance with their other erroneous views, the generality seem to have expected Messiah only as a man, or as a being of intermediate nature, not as truly divine.² But, however this matter stood, the form in which the question of the Messiahship of Jesus was submitted to the Jews of Jerusalem would almost equally operate against their willing reception of him as Messiah. If they expected a *divine* Messiah, only the more difficult would it be for them to recognise that glorious per-

¹ John v. 17-23; vii. 29; viii. 58; x. 30, 38.

² This subject is discussed in Kuinoel's *Prolegomena* to the Gospel of John; Pye Smith's *Test. to the Mess.*, 5th Ed., Vol. i. p. 391; Basnage's *Hist. of the Jews*, B. 4, ch. 24.

sonage in the poor, despised, sorrowful man of Nazareth of Galilee ; and if they expected a *human* Messiah, only the more startling and stumbling would it be to them to hear this man of Nazareth speaking of himself not only as "the Christ," but as "the Christ, the Son of God"—saying that "God was his (own) Father, making himself equal with God." Accordingly in Jerusalem this claim to supreme divinity became the chief ostensible ground of opposition to him. Whenever he made it, they tried either to seize him, or to stone him ; and on the ground of it, as blasphemous, he was at last condemned and crucified.¹ They denounced him as an impostor—"a sinner"—on other grounds than this : "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath ;" but on the ground of blasphemy they seem to have thought that they would have at once the sanction of the law and the consent of the people, not only in rejecting him, but in putting him to death. At least so they endeavoured to vindicate themselves in their attempts to stone him : "For a good work, we stone thee not, but for blasphemy : and because 'thou, being a man, makest thyself God.'"²

There is one other matter still which, in accounting for the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus by the Jewish nation, ought to be carefully considered : namely, the influence and management of the high priest. We should naturally have anticipated that one who held so high and influential a station,—who was the *spiritual*, and also at this time, under the Romans, the *political* head of the whole nation³—sitting both in Aaron's and in Moses' seat,—would necessarily have much to say and

¹ See John v. 18 ; vii. 30 ; viii. 59 ; x. 31, 39 ; xix. 7 : Mark xiv. 60-65.

² John ix. 16 ; x. 33.

³ Jos. Ant., B. xx. ch. x.

do with such an event as the rejection and condemnation of Christ; and our anticipations would not have been disappointed; for unquestionably (as all the gospels, and especially that of John, make evident) to CAIAPHAS, who then held the office of high priest, more than to any other one man, are the responsibility and guilt of this great national crime, "the crucifixion of the Lord of glory," to be attributed. He was an agent fit for the work; and he had a more direct and wicked hand in it than, perhaps, any other *human* being whatever.¹

To give even the merest outline of the conduct of Caiaphas, in connection with the condemnation and death of Jesus, would require this discourse to be extended much beyond the prescribed limits. Suffice it therefore to remind you only of one or two parts of it. And, first, *his* was the truculent and bloody counsel on which the whole procedure of the Jewish rulers against Christ was founded—"It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not"—a counsel which seems obviously enough to imply that he who gave it, and they who acted on it, believed in the reality of Christ's miracles, and were convinced that he was truly the Messiah. For only if his miracles were real, and only if he was the Messiah they expected, could there be any ground for the apprehension they expressed, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."² O how infamous the counsel in this light! and the man who gave it!

Again, Caiaphas certainly took the leading and most active part in the measures employed for the apprehen-

¹ Lightfoot says of Caiaphas that he was the "wickedest man then upon the earth excepting Judas Iscariot." I doubt much whether even Judas should be excepted.

² John xi. 47-50.

sion and condemnation of Jesus. Whether he had personally any consultations with the traitor Judas, has not been recorded; but he must have consented to employ and bribe that wretched man, and this made him a full partner both in his infamy and guilt. The high priest's servant Malchus, along with Judas, plainly led the band which apprehended Jesus in the garden; and in the high priest's palace, as well as under his direction, the nefarious proceedings which issued in the condemnation of the innocent Saviour, took place. All these proceedings hinged upon the counsel that it was "expedient" for the rulers that Jesus should die, and their object and aim evidently were, *per fas aut nefas*, to compass his condemnation and death. I remind you only of the last of these proceedings which gained its end when all the others had failed, and which seems to have been hatched in the high priest's own crafty, and deceitful, and daring heart: it was by Caiaphas that Jesus was solemnly adjured, "in the name of the living God," to tell whether he was "the Christ, the Son of God," or not. This was a cunningly contrived and finely wrought net, from which Jesus had no means of escape; for, had he refused to answer, he would doubtless have been condemned, not merely for contumacy, but for despising or profaning the name of God, in which he had been so solemnly adjured; while by answering *truly* he exposed himself to the charge of blasphemy, as both he and Caiaphas well knew. Thus, this unprincipled and "bloody and deceitful man travelled with iniquity and conceived mischief;" but his mischief did not fall on his innocent and divine victim alone: it "returned upon his own head" and heart. His conduct seems to warrant the horrible conclusion—nay to render that conclusion unavoidable—that he was thoroughly convinced that Jesus was indeed what he said he was,

"the Christ, **THE SON OF GOD**,"—the Son of God, too, in a sense in which the title could not be applied to a mere man, or a mere creature, without blasphemy—a sense which the Jews themselves had explained as involving equality with God. This conclusion indeed seems almost too dreadful to be entertained. It attributes to this man a malignity and deceitfulness and guilt, as well as a daringness, which have seldom or never been ascribed to any but "the Wicked One." But this, I apprehend, is no strong objection to it; and if it be as true as it appears to be unavoidable, this miscreant high priest and the Jewish rulers who acted along with him and under him must, I think, be held to have been the most depraved, the most deceitful, the most infatuated and heaven-daring wretches that ever trod the surface of earth, or breathed the atmosphere of heaven. Their wickedness is truly indescribable. "The men of his generation who can describe?"¹

Taking into view then all these considerations both as to the creed and character of the Jews, both rulers and people, there is no difficulty in believing them to have rejected and crucified the true Messiah. It may be objected indeed that all that has been said does not fully account for that most remarkable and apparently unnatural change which, according to the gospels, took place on the feelings of the Jewish multitude in regard to Jesus immediately before his crucifixion. One day we find them conducting him in triumph into Jerusalem, spreading their garments in the way, and shouting hosannas; but two or three days after, apparently without a cause, they cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!" How can this be explained? I answer, Easily. I do not speak of the proverbial changeability of the mind of

¹ Isa. liii. 8—Boothroyd's version. See Appendix, Note II.

a promiscuous multitude; nor do I ascribe this phenomenon to the possible fact that the individuals who were loudest in the cry, in the two cases, belonged to different classes of the people. For neither of these things, I apprehend, would suffice to account for the truly great and amazing change. But reflect on the circumstances. In the one case the minds of the multitude had been excited by the report of the resurrection of Lazarus,¹ and they were plainly acting on the supposition that now the time was come for Jesus to declare himself,—now he was about to ascend the throne of his father David, and fulfil all their worldly anticipations and desires. Their language plainly imports this; and, with the views they cherished, it is not wonderful that their minds were excited to the highest pitch of confidence and exultation. For two or three days they waited for the expected declaration, coming to him daily in the temple,—and they waited, no doubt, with considerable surprise and some measure of disappointment; but still their fervent wishes and hopes would sustain the suspense. His last words in the temple were indeed ominous;² but “the people” did not understand them, and therefore, doubtless, continued to hope on. But what was the very next sight *they* had of him? Examine the record carefully, and you will find, I think, that it was when Pilate presented him to them at the door of the Praetorium, crowned with thorns, clothed with the purple robe, his face besmeared with blood and spitting, and his footsteps tracked with blood from his scourged and lacerated back. O what a spectacle that for their Messiah to present! “BEHOLD THE MAN!” said Pilate, hoping to move the hearts of the multitude, if not those of the rulers, to pity. He fell into a great mistake. Caiaphas himself—nay Satan himself—could

¹ John xii. 17, 18.

² John xii. 31-36.

hardly have contrived a more effectual way of shutting the Jewish people's bowels of compassion, or goading them to immediate and immeasurable rage, against Jesus, than to present him in that guise. "Behold the man!" "Yes, behold, O ye foolish and deceived people, this man whom ye fondly deemed your King—your Messiah! and who has just led you to the brink of rebellion—hopeless rebellion against your oppressors! what think ye of him now? Behold him condemned for imposture and blasphemy by your own priests and rulers, delivered over to the Gentiles, and become their mockery and scorn! Mark, the hands of heathen dogs hold him fast, the lash of the Roman lictors has been applied to his sacred body, and his countenance is defaced "with shame and spitting"—the work of the lowest of the Roman soldiery! what think you of your promised Messiah now?"—Any one who reflects for a moment on the character and strength of Jewish prejudice will perceive that this spectacle was enough to turn the hearts of the multitude, instantaneously and as one man, against Jesus; and to fill them with shame and rage and malice, in proportion to the fervour of their past hopes in regard to him. What they now saw would be enough to convince them that they had been deceived in him,—that he was not what they had supposed him to be, and what his wondrous works seemed to prove him to be. These works were not now before their eyes; but *he*, in all this humiliation and shame, was; and that humiliation and shame were reflected from him on themselves, and on all their national glory; and only the more so that they had but yesterday been ready to receive and honour him as the Messiah, and that Pilate now jeered them on the subject, saying "Behold your king!" It was not a time for calm reasoning, even though that could have overcome the influ-

ence of present appearances. This *sight* of Jesus was enough to convince the multitude that he *could* not be Messiah—that he *must* be an impostor. It would, in their idea, have been horrid wickedness to imagine that the true son of David, “the beloved of God,” would ever be seen in such a plight as that. ‘No, no,’ they would reflect, ‘the rulers must have been all along in the right; we have been deluded and led by this Jesus to the very brink of destruction; he is and must be a deceiver and blasphemer; and he deserves therefore to be crucified.’—Methinks I can see the great multitude around the judgment-seat of Pilate, gazing in silence for a moment on the spectacle presented to them, as if to be sure that this is indeed “*the Man*,” but no sooner do they distinctly recognise him, and feel the power of these and such like reflections, than the cry—raised first, no doubt, by the priests and rulers who were nearest the judgment-seat—is taken up by the crowds behind, and echoed by them, in fierce and fiendish scream, from every side: “CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM! AWAY WITH HIM! AWAY WITH HIM!”¹

But to conclude: I think I have said enough to account for the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, both rulers and people, and to show therefore that that rejection ought to be no stumbling-block to the faith of the Christian. The truth is, that the reception of Jesus by such a people and such a priesthood, had they not been by the grace of God completely transformed, would have been an insurmountable obstacle to future faith in him by others. And when we consider this, along with the facts that the Jews’ unbelief was foretold in Scripture, and that it has brought on their nation all the calamities, also foretold, which have over-

¹ John xix. 5 15.

taken it since, that which seemed a difficulty becomes a demonstration of the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus—a demonstration as irrefragable in its strength as it is unparalleled in its character.

I insist not on the practical instruction furnished by the subject of this discourse. The Christian poet has pointed to the warning which the fate of the Jews addresses to nations :

“ Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first,
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn :
If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
Peel'd, scattered, and exterminated thus ;
If vice received her retribution due,
When we are visited, what hope for you ? ”¹

The apostle points to a similar warning as addressed to the whole Christian church among the Gentiles : “ Thou wilt say then, the (natural) branches (of the olive-tree) were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear : For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them who fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in ; for God is able to graff them in again.”² And I only add that this subject addresses the language of manifold warning to every Christian professor and gospel hearer. It says, Beware of trusting in high spiritual privilege without spirituality of mind and purity of heart ! To the Jews such confidence became a stumbling-block and a

¹ Cowper.

² Rom. xi. 19-23.

snare.—Beware equally of neglecting and misreading scripture. The Jews' perversions of scripture blinded and hardened them.—Beware especially of combining, in any degree, the things of God and the interests of the present evil world, or subjecting the former to the service of the latter. "Ye cannot serve both God and Mammon;" and how much less can ye please God by turning his service into that of Mammon? The Jewish priesthood and people did so, and became "enemies."—Beware of denying or putting off the claims of Jesus Christ to a place—the highest place—in your hearts. Remember that a cordial faith in him, and a personal acquaintance with him, and with his salvation, are the only means of preserving you from the most deadly errors *now*, and securing you a place in his presence and kingdom *hereafter*—securing "the salvation that is in him with eternal glory." There is no salvation but in *him*; and there is salvation in *him* only for the believer. "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation"—a condemnation that must be heavier in the case of unbelieving gospel hearers now, than even in that of the unbelieving Jews of his own day—"that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"On us and on our children be his blood!"—
Such was your imprecation, O ye Jews!
When in your sight the world's Redeemer stood
Gash'd o'er with wounds, and emptying ev'ry vein
For man's redemption; and, behold! it flows,
It whelms upon you in a flood-gate tide!

Oh! slow of heart, when will ye understand,
That thus afflicted, scatter'd and dispersed
Through every clime and kingdom of the world,
Ye are sent forth to publish, as ye pass,
How truly CHRIST predicted of your fate;
And though your lips deny, your sufferings prove
That prophet JESUS, whom your fathers slew,
Was Saviour, Christ, Messiah, Son of God.

CUMBERLAND.

II.

The Infidel Opinion.

THE BIBLE—Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? the Author, God himself;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds!

Hear, while I briefly tell what mortals proved,
By effort vast of ingenuity,—
Proved from the Bible, which, as thou hast heard,
So plainly spoke that all could understand.
First, and not least in number, argued some
From out this book itself, it was a lie—
A fable, framed by crafty men to cheat
The simple herd, and make them bow the knee
To kings and priests.

POLLOK.

Text.

2 Peter i. 16.—“For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: The infidel opinion, that the history of Jesus Christ is a fable—How it is commonly supported—How it may be most advantageously refuted—Plan of this Discourse:—QUERY I. How did the supposed fable concerning Jesus Christ come into existence?—The character of Jesus Christ as given by the Evangelists—Jewish fables—Heathen fables—The Straussian theory—The origin of this supposed Christian fable unaccountable. QUERY II. How did the faith of it spread in primitive times?—The belief of other religious legends, Popish, Mohammedan, Jewish, Heathen, can be explained—The rapid spread of Christianity, on the infidel theory, cannot. QUERY III. How can the beneficial influence of Christianity on Society be accounted for, if it be false?—This influence corroborative evidence of the truth of a religion—How the question as to Christianity might be investigated—The moral condition of the Heathen world when Christianity appeared—Its influence on Society only a secondary fruit—The benevolent efforts of Christians for the good of the world, though only partially successful, an attestation of Christianity. CONCLUSION: A warning to the young—The responsibility of man for his belief.

II.

THE INFIDEL OPINION.

THE INFIDEL OPINION concerning JESUS CHRIST is that he is a fabulous person, and the gospel history an imposture or a "*myth*." Either such a person as Jesus Christ never existed, or, though a person of that name may have lived and taught in Judea at the time assigned to him, the narratives of his life and character and miracles, contained in the New Testament, are mere fictions. They may have been a designed imposture, or they may have been an unconscious invention—an illusion, but they are not to be received as true and indubitable history.

The principal grounds on which infidels have been accustomed to rest this opinion, and endeavour to maintain it, are such as these:—That the evangelical records are full of extravagant or impossible fictions, which are in themselves altogether incredible; that there are many inconsistencies and discrepancies and contradictions in them which demonstrate their falsehood; and that, as Christianity has in subsequent ages been employed in the service of the vilest systems of superstition, and priestcraft, and political tyranny, therefore its very origin is to be suspected—it is to be held an imposture

from the beginning : "it has been manufactured and fabricated for that purpose."

Now, undoubtedly, the best way of meeting these allegations is to show, *first*, that we have unquestionable evidence that the books which contain the accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ were in existence shortly after the time of his death, and were believed in by multitudes of persons who, living in the same country and in the same generation with Christ himself, had the best possible opportunities of ascertaining the truth of the narratives in question. Of this we have great abundance of satisfactory proof of various kinds.—*Next*, we might show that there are no real or insurmountable difficulties or incongruities in these narratives. All apparent discrepancies can either be reconciled, or sufficiently accounted for by our ignorance of the manners and customs, the events and circumstances, of the times when the books were written.¹ Similar or greater difficulties are found in all ancient histories and ancient books whatever. The truth is, the *absence* of such difficulties would be a juster ground of suspicion than their *presence*.—And, *lastly*, it might be argued that, if any doctrine or history can be shown to have been true at the beginning, it cannot be proved false, or even justly called in question, because it has afterwards been abused to wrong purposes, or interwoven with systems of falsehood and tyranny. For what good things have not been thus abused by wicked men? It is commonly not *bad* things, but *good* things, that are thus employed to support error and oppression. Bad things would not serve the purpose. Learning, law, liberty, civilisation, and religion have all in turn, or all together, been degraded to the worst purposes by selfish and unprincipled men. Christianity

See Appendix, Note III.

is not responsible for the wrongs which have been done to it, or done in its name,—the men who wronged it are. Indeed, from its immeasurable wrongs a very strong argument may be drawn for the divinity of its origin; for, had it not been divine, it would long ago have perished through the very abuse to which it has been subjected: the villanies practised in its name would have sunk it into oblivion, or banished it from the earth.

But, though this is the best way of meeting the allegations and assertions of infidels, I do not propose at present to adopt it. This kind of argument is more suitable for a volume than a discourse, and is to be found fully and satisfactorily developed in many books on the evidences of Christianity. What I propose is to state a few simple queries and make a few general remarks on this infidel opinion—that the account of Jesus Christ contained in the New Testament is an imposture or a fable:—

I.

How did the supposed fable come into existence?

The existence of a fable is a *fact*, and must be capable of being accounted for as well as any other fact. A *fable* could not come into existence of itself, more than a *world* could come into existence of itself. It must have had a cause. It must have originated in some mind—either that of God, or that of man. Now in what mind did this fable of the life and character of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the New Testament, originate?

There is the more reason for asking this question, that this fable, if it be a fable, is certainly the most wonderful, the most sublime, the most noble creation of mind that ever was submitted to the contemplation of men. Infidels themselves have very generally ad-

mired the character of Jesus Christ, as depicted in the gospels; but their admiration and eulogistic language, as well as those of Christians, have fallen infinitely short of the theme. All language fails to do justice to the perfection and beauty of the character of Jesus Christ. Think how the dignity and wisdom of manhood, the gentleness and tenderness of womanhood, and the purity and simplicity of childhood, may be said to be combined in the character of the man Christ Jesus, and so combined that instead of injuring or neutralising, they enhance and illustrate the attractiveness of each other. You see in him the perfection of human nature, in both the various ages and the various relations of human life. Though you take all the excellencies of the holy men of old, of whom you read in scripture, without any of their faults, and combine them with all the noble qualities of the sages and philosophers of heathen antiquity, without any of their follies, you cannot form a character at all equal in dignity and purity and beauty to that of Jesus Christ. "He was fairer"—infinitely fairer—"than the children of men." Wisdom, purity, grace and truth, and nothing else, proceeded from his mouth and pervaded his life. He is said to have challenged his enemies, in his own day, to convict him of a fault; and certainly infidels since, however inclined, have not been able to prove one in his portrait.¹

Then, too, it is to be remembered that this fable, if it be a fable, was designed to exhibit, not the picture merely of a perfect man, but that of *God-man*—that of a Divine person thinking, speaking, and acting, in human nature. The gospel narratives themselves contain undoubted evidence of this design; and the design, evidently, increased immeasurably the difficulty of forming

¹ See Appendix, Note IV.

and sustaining the character of Jesus Christ. It makes the fable concerning him, therefore, unspeakably more wonderful. For this end has been so admirably gained that it may be safely said that no human being has ever found in the character of Christ a single feature or lineament inconsistent with his supposed divinity. It is indeed from *his* character, words, and works, that our noblest and most consistent conceptions of the eternal Deity are now derived; and there is one idea, especially, embodied in the history of Jesus Christ, which is as far above anything which the human mind had ever before conceived of God, as heaven is above earth: I mean the idea of the love of God to man—that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.”¹

It ought to be added, that this character of Jesus Christ has been set before us in the gospel records, not by mere description or painting, but in a dramatic form, by a plain narrative of his words and deeds. The authors of these writings have not told us that he was such and such a person, having such and such a character. They deal very little in this kind of description. They have told us, on the other hand, what he did and what he said, leaving us to gather for ourselves what kind of person he was; and this is a mode of writing, be it remembered, which, while easy and natural in the case of truth, is the most difficult of all modes in the case of fiction. It is in this species of writing that the loftiest triumphs of human genius, like those of a Shakespeare and a Scott, have been achieved.

But, to return to the question before us: If all this narrative of the life and character of Jesus Christ be fabulous, in what mind did the fable originate—whether

¹ John iii. 16.

that of God or that of man? and from whom has it proceeded, under the guise of truth? To say that it originated with, and came from God, would be absurd, as well as impious; for He cannot be conceived to propagate falsehood under the name of truth. But if it originated with man, then, with what man, or class of men—Jews or Gentiles, good men or bad? Where is the fountain that could have yielded such a stream of sweet, pure, living water? We all know what kind of fables the Jewish mind framed and delighted in. You have specimens of them in the *Apocrypha* and the *Talmud*: such as the story of Tobit,—that of Bel and the dragon,—that of Susanna and the elders. They may well be described as “nursery tales,” or “old wives’ fables.” We know also what kind of fictions the heathen mind delighted to create. You have specimens of them in the gods and goddesses of the Greek and Roman pantheon—the best and most refined specimens. And what were they *morally*? Most impure and abominable. The truth is, that persons who should think and speak and act as the man-gods and woman-gods of Greece and Rome are represented as having done, would not now be admitted into decent society; they would hardly be fit companions for the criminals that fill our jails, or “the lewd fellows of the baser sort” that lounge about the corners of our streets. And can it then be rationally imagined that any human mind, accustomed to such conceptions, could have originated the pure, the glorious, the miraculous fiction of the life and character of Jesus Christ? The imagination is not extravagant merely, it is outrageously absurd. It disregards and tramples on all the laws of human nature and the lessons of everyday experience.

It may be remarked, here, that infidels have not been much in the habit of risking a definite conjecture as to

the manner in which the fabulous history of Jesus Christ arose; but one of the last and most presumptuous of them has done so. Dr Strauss, in his "Life of Jesus" (published so recently as 1835), supposes that the gospel narratives originated with the disciples of a Jewish rabbi, of the name of Jesus, who lived and taught in Palestine about the time usually assigned to our blessed Lord. These supposed disciples of this supposed Jewish rabbi believed their master to be the Messiah, then also expected and longed for by the Jews; and they accordingly attributed to him all the characteristics which the Old Testament assigns to the Messiah, or which from the Old Testament they fancied to be appropriate to him. They were not designing or fraudulent impostors, but self-deluded fanatics. Their books were written, he supposes, somewhere about the middle of the second century.¹—Now besides being in direct opposition to all authentic history on the subject, this supposition, you will observe, does little more than shift the difficulty from the *New* Testament to the *Old*. For if the character of Christ was found in the Old Testament—whether in complete and bright portraiture, or in faint and somewhat incomplete outline—how came it to be found there? Did the Old Testament emanate from God or from man? If from God, then the account of the life of Christ contained in the New Testament only obtains new evidence of its truth; being in that case the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. For no infidel, I presume, who has any respect for his own reputation for sanity, will say that though the prophecy was divine, the only fulfilment of it that was ever heard of is fabulous. But if the Old Testament came from man (as Strauss intends, no doubt, to insinuate when he speaks of the "old legends") then how was

¹ See Pref. to Neander's *Life of Jesus Christ*; and *Bib. Sac.*, vol. 2.

man able to portray the character of Messiah as there given? And how came it also that these supposed disciples of this hypothetical and unheard of Jewish rabbi drew from the books of the Old Testament a description of the Messiah so different from—so opposite to—that which all other Jews—real flesh-and-blood Jews—drew from the same source? We know what the common expectation of the Jews, as to their promised Messiah, was. That expectation is still cherished by their descendants who walk our streets and wait, “with failing eyes and fainting heart,” for their long-tarrying Deliverer. It is in every important point exceedingly different from, and in many points exactly opposite to, the character of Jesus Christ as depicted by the evangelists. And how can this be explained? Did the fountain of the Jewish mind “send forth at the same place,” about the same time, “sweet water and bitter?” Did “the fig-tree yield olive-berries, or the vine figs?” Or, rather, Did men, in this instance, “gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles?” On the Straussian theory they did; and thus the infidel, to escape miracles, embraces monstrosities. He defies history and dethrones reason, and fondly dreams that, by giving a fabulous account of the origin of a fact, he has done what God himself cannot do—turned the *fact* into *fable*.

But not to dwell longer on this query, the conclusion of the whole matter may be stated thus: If the history of Jesus Christ be a fable, it must have originated either with good men or bad men. If with the former, then, we have good men committing, without compunction, one of the greatest of conceivable crimes—that of knowingly propagating religious falsehood under the name of truth. And if with the latter, then, we have bad men conceiving, portraying, and recommending to

the imitation of their fellow-men, the highest and holiest pattern of religious and moral conduct that ever was set before the world ; and not only so, but combining this pattern of humanity with the revelation of the Divinity, and giving us nobler ideas of God, and of divine goodness, than God himself ever gave. O infidel, if thou canst believe this, great is thy faith !—great thy credulity !

II.

How came the supposed fable to be so readily and widely believed, in the primitive age ?

The infidel who holds the gospel history of Jesus Christ to be a fable is bound to account not only for its miraculous existence, but also for the miraculous rapidity with which, in the beginning of the Christian era, the faith of that fable spread among both Jews and heathens, and especially among the latter.

Reflect on this : it is generally an easy thing to give a rational and satisfactory account of the prevalent belief of religious legends or fables. We know, for instance, how popish legends come to be received by the Roman catholic people. The authority of the church and the priest removes all difficulty : as has been seen in the recent imposition of the dogma of the “Immaculate conception.” We know how Mohammedan fables were spread. The conquering armies of the Caliphs carried the open Koran in the one hand and the drawn scimitar in the other, and imposed, on the corrupt and enervated nations of the East, the faith of the one by the fear of the other. We know how Jewish fables came, in former times, to be believed. They were incorporated with, or annexed to, a religious system that was believed to have come from heaven ; and they were recommended by the supposed wisdom and authority of

the "masters of Israel"—men professedly set apart by divine appointment to expound that system. Nay, we can easily understand how the ancient mythology of Greece and Rome may have come to be received by the common people; for the learned and philosophical classes never truly received it. It was probably thus: Certain names had come down by tradition from the dim twilight of antiquity—before letters were invented, or history began to be written—and had come surrounded with a halo of heroic deeds or surpassing wisdom. These names were first revered and honoured as those of the benefactors of mankind; next, amid the ignorance of the true God that prevailed, the dead men, or demons, to whom these names belonged, began to be revered and trusted in as superhuman protectors—demigods; and last of all, Poetry, stepping forward with her magic wand, clothed them with the majesty of divinity, and seated them on the thrones of Olympus. In this case, however, the process was a work of ages; for we have good reason to believe that some of the principal gods of the ancient pantheon derived their names, and the *nuclei* of their fame, from the men of antediluvian times—"the mighty men who were of old, men of renown:" while, at the same time, this process was greatly aided by the power of the ancient tyrants—the Nimrods of the post-diluvian age—as well as by the cunning of the idol priesthoods of the same period, who were under their patronage and in their pay. Kingcraft and priestcraft were leagued together to supply the want—the great want of humanity—the knowledge of an "UNKNOWN GOD."

It is a comparatively easy thing, then, to account for the wide-spread faith of other religious fables. But how shall that of Christ and Christianity be accounted for? How shall even a probable explanation of its

rapid diffusion be given? For, in this case, none of these causes was in operation to forward the belief of the supposed fable; but all of them were in operation to prevent it. All the established religions of the nations were antagonists to Christianity; because it opposed all, and sought to overturn all. The authorities of the nations were opposed to it; for it condemned their tyrannies and cruelties, and sought to emancipate mankind from their power—not directly, indeed, but by implication; for it introduced all its subjects into the “glorious liberty of the children of God,” and laid the foundation both of civil and religious liberty in the maxim, “*We ought to obey God rather than man.*” Above all, Greek and Roman learning and civilization had then reached their noontide splendour; authentic history was being written; the greater part of the known world was under one civil government; “many ran to and fro, and knowledge was increased:” then was the very golden age of classical literature. It would be as rational to believe that spectres are to be seen at noon-day in the marketplace, as to suppose that the faith of a fabulous person, or of a fabulous history like that of Jesus Christ, could be easily propagated at the time and in the circumstances in which Christianity arose and began its course.—Yet, somehow, this lying fable—this wicked imposture or fanatical delusion, as the infidel reckons it—did spread among the nations, and that too by the simple preaching of unlettered and unknown men, more rapidly than any other story, true or false, which has ever been proclaimed as a revelation from heaven. It spread so quickly that within a single generation from the death of Christ, in Rome itself (the metropolis of the world, and so distant from Judea), it was thought necessary to endeavour to arrest its progress by means of a bloody persecution. The first heathen persecution (for Christian-

ity had been born and cradled and reared amid the fires of Jewish persecution) instigated and superintended by the miscreant Nero, took place in the 64th year of the Christian era—the 33d year from the time assigned for the death and resurrection of the fabulous person whose story was so widely believed by those who had the best opportunities of knowing whether it was true or false. In this persecution multitudes of Christians were put to death in the most barbarous ways which heathen resentment and cruelty could invent, and for no other reason than that they believed in this so-called fable. Yet this did not stop the miraculous spread of the miraculous fable. It seems rather to have given it additional power to draw the attention and constrain the belief of men: so that after a few generations more, and after ten bloody persecutions, Christianity may be said to have triumphed over all opposition and “turned the world upside down.” It had gathered around its standard the peoples and nations of the Roman empire; it had entered into the pagan temples and shrines, and turned the ancient deities out of doors; it had secured the homage, real or feigned, of the Roman emperor, and sat by his side on the throne of the Cæsars.¹

Now let any infidel, whose unbelief has not made him irrational, seriously ask himself how all this is to be rationally accounted for, on the supposition that the history of Jesus Christ is a fable—an impudent, easily refuted fable,—as it must have been known to be to many intelligent men of the time, if it was a fable at all; for they had about as good means of judging of its truth or falsehood, as we would have, in the case of any similar history (were such a history published this year) of events which were alleged to have taken place in Britain, France, or Italy, some ten, twenty, or thirty years

¹ See Appendix, Note V.

ago. Let the infidel, I say, ask himself, how all this progress of Christianity is to be accounted for. Are men so ready to change their ancient religions, and to suffer tortures and death, even for the cause of truth, that these men of the primitive age can be believed to have done so for the sake of a fable—a mere fable? Bring the matter home, O infidel! Do not hoodwink your own reason! Do not belie your own observation and experience! Did you ever know a rational man who, without a motive, would have acted and suffered thus, for what he knew to be a lie?—Allow that Jesus Christ was a divine messenger, and all difficulty in his life and character and miracles is removed. The miracles were certainly not beyond the power of the Creator and Preserver of the universe to perform. But contend that the religion of Jesus Christ was an imposture and his life a fable, yet that rational men at the time believed in him, and suffered the loss of all things, and life itself, rather than disown their faith,—and you create a difficulty which no reasoning can remove, which no sophistry can hide. You contend for something far more difficult to believe in than miracles—a moral impossibility. Forgive me for saying that you act like the Pharisees of old—"straining out the gnat, and swallowing the camel!"

III.

How came this supposed fable, and the religion founded on it, wherever they have been truly, purely, and stedfastly believed, to exert so powerful and beneficial an influence on human society?

This question, to do it justice, would require a treatise for itself. I can only, as in the preceding, glance at the subject.—It will be admitted, even by infidels, that the beneficial influence of a religious system on

society is a corroborative evidence of its truth. To contend that a false religion is a *good* tree, and may bring forth good fruit, or, *vice versa*, that true religion is a *corrupt* tree, and may bring forth corrupt fruit, would evidently be to discard reason, to confound light and darkness, good and evil, and, so far, to obliterate all distinction between truth and falsehood,—making the attempt to distinguish them, at the same time, unprofitable. Infidels, of all men, cannot consistently do this; for one of their readiest and most trusted arguments against Christianity is the evil influence which, they say, it exerts on society. Confounding it with its perversions, or attributing to it the abuses which have been made of it, they adduce these as sufficient proofs of its falsehood. They admit the principle, therefore, “That every tree is known by its fruits,”—though, in this instance, they misapply it; for no system, whether true or false, ought to be made responsible for the evils which flow from the corruptions or perversions of that system, but only for its own native fruits. It is the Christianity of the New Testament alone which we defend; not that of the Roman, or the Greek, or the English, or the Scottish church,—nor indeed of any other church that ever was, or may be. Churches are mixed communities, Christianity is a pure and unmixed system of truth and duty. Churches perish, Christianity remains—remains for all time—like its author, “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

It may be very difficult to ascertain what are the native fruits of a religious system, or its true influence on society. But this does not affect the argument. In so far as they can be ascertained, they will show the character of the system, and help to prove or disprove its truth. And when the inquiry is entered on honestly, and conducted carefully, the difficulty will not be found

insurmountable. Such an inquiry might be naturally followed out under three branches or heads:—1st, What *have been* the prevailing condition and morals of society, under the reign of heathenism, whether of ancient or modern times,—and also when infidelity has obtained ascendancy, as during the French revolution of last century?—2d, What *is* the condition of those societies or nations in which Christianity has been most purely and permanently and widely diffused as yet? Britain, for instance, might be taken as the best modern example of the influence of pure Christianity; and its fruits there be contrasted with those of heathenism and infidelity as well as popery and Mohammedanism.—And 3d, it ought to be inquired also, What *would be* the condition and morals of a society in which Christianity had the full opportunity of displaying its native fruits?—What *will be* the condition of the whole world, when the vaticinations of scripture are realised, and “the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ?” The infidel may count these vaticinations no better than idle dreams; but he can *imagine* them fulfilled—all nations being evangelised, and almost every man in every nation a true and consistent Christian, walking in the purity and truth, the peace and love which it is no idle dream to say that Christianity enjoins on all who embrace it—and what, then, would be the state of the whole world? Why, if he could realise such a state of things, and had but the heart to love it, I have no doubt that even the infidel, like Saul among the prophets, would feel the impulses of a new spirit, and be constrained to join in the song of hope and joy:—“Let the Heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for

he cometh to judge the earth : he shall judge the earth with his righteousness, and the people with his truth!"¹

I do not propose to follow out these inquiries, but shall content myself with three observations on the subject.—The first is, that the state of public morals among the most refined nations of heathen antiquity is now altogether inconceivable by persons living in Christian society. I do not refer to the things done by heathens "in secret," of which an apostle has said that it would be "a shame even to speak" of them to Christians; but I refer to immoralities and vices openly and unblushingly practised, and especially to those dictated and consecrated by their religious systems. So far are the statements of the apostle Paul on this subject, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, from being exaggerations, that every one of them could easily be substantiated and even intensified by abundance of evidence from the Greek and Roman historians and moralists and poets. Some of the vices then practised, and even gloried in by high and low, have no proper names in the English tongue, and to characterise or describe them in a Christian assembly would be an unpardonable offence against common decency; and beside these, the worship of their heathen gods "called to uncleanness" and not "to holiness." These gods were themselves both the patterns and the patrons of prostitution, adultery, and incest. Drunkenness and debauchery, theft and dishonesty, cunning and perjury—every kind of "deceit and violence"—as well as impurity and voluptuousness, were sanctioned by their example, and recommended by their names. The worst of the villanies and pollutions of the gods were represented in the theatres; and the imitation of their licentiousness was consecrated in the religious mysteries and festivals.

¹ Ps. xcvi. 11-13.

Their shrines and temples were the licensed scenes of all conceivable abominations; and that too not among one people merely, but among all the renowned nations of ancient heathendom—in Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and Rome—however advanced in science and philosophy, however celebrated for civilization and art. The truth is, these ancient nations, like the modern Hindoos and Chinese, were only, by reason of their civilization, rendered the more artificially and laboriously impure. Purer morals are often found among the rudest than among the most refined of heathen nations.

I need hardly speak of the “horrid cruelties” common among these nations, constituting the most solemn observances of their religious worship. Infanticide seems to have been even more common among the ancient heathens than among the modern. Human sacrifices were universally thought acceptable to the gods; and in times of calamity hecatombs of miserable captives, or criminals, or even free and innocent citizens, were offered to appease the wrath of bloodthirsty demons, or avert the vengeance of “unknown gods.” This was the case among both savage and civilised nations. “The Carthaginians in times of public calamity, not only burned alive the children of the best families to Saturn, and that by hundreds, but sometimes sacrificed themselves, in the same manner, in great numbers. Here in Britain, and in Gaul, it was common to surround a man, or multitudes of men, with a colossal image of wicker-work and burn them to death in honour of the gods.” And who knows, my friends, but that on this very spot where we now worship the God of love and peace, in the name of his incarnate son Jesus Christ, offerings of this description may in former times have been presented to a Woden or a Thor, a Tuesco or a Saturn? O how plain that if Christianity had done nothing more

for us than delivered us from the fear and worship of such imaginary deities—the representatives of Satan—and from the constant, agonising terrors which must have brooded over the souls of their worshippers; if it had done nothing else than reveal the glory of the one God and Father of all, in the face of Jesus Christ, its benefit to man—its service to human society, would be incalculable!—I cannot stay to allude, even thus summarily, to the prevalence of polygamy, or the degradation of woman,—to the existence of despotism, or the universality and unmitigated severity of slavery,—to the barbarities of war, or the commonness of private murders and assassination,—among all heathen nations, ancient and modern, savage and civilised. Infidels do not believe in a personal Devil, the enemy of God, the author of sin, and the destroyer of men; but personal or impersonal, nothing so well accounts for the moral condition of the heathen world, in all ages and all states of society, as the reign of the Devil—all-pervading devilishness—"the whole world lying in the Wicked One."¹

The second observation I make on this subject is, That the benefit which *Society* derives from Christianity is only one of its secondary and indirect fruits. Its direct and immediate operation is to purify and bless the individual who receives it—to sanctify and save his soul; which it accomplishes certainly, and in time perfectly, however small be its influence, meanwhile, on general society around him. That influence plainly depends not on Christianity itself, but on the numbers and position and character of true Christians in any parti-

¹ Illustrations of the moral state of heathen nations may be found in Tholuck's Treatise on "The Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism, especially among the ancient Greeks and Romans, viewed in the light of Christianity."—*Clark's Bib. Cab.*, No. 28; also in Fuller's "Gospel its own Witness," chap. 6. See also "The Pagan Altar and Jehovah's Temple," by R. Weaver, etc.

cular society. Christianity can convert a dying malefactor into an heir of immortality, a persecuting Saul into a holy apostle, a profligate Newton into a devout preacher of the gospel, or a savage and bloody-minded Africaner into a peaceful, harmless lamb, while yet its influence on general society may be so small as to be imperceptible; and it may be performing thousands and tens of thousands of such transformations (or, which is the same thing, training up from infancy in Christian purity and piety those who would otherwise have become criminals and profligates), even when the public profession of it has become so corrupt or imperfect, as to have little power over society at large. When infidels, therefore, fix on a society or nation called Christian, but in which genuine disciples of Christ are both few and uninfluential,—or when they instance corrupt and perverted systems of Christianity, and parade the crimes and immoralities to be found in connection with them as the fruits of the religion of Jesus Christ,—they are plainly chargeable with a foolish or wilful mistake—guilty of ignorant or designed misrepresentation. These are not the fruits of *Christianity*, but rather of *infidelity*—practical or speculative. Christianity does not produce or encourage these evils; it has only failed as yet to eradicate or banish them from the society in which it exists, but over which it does not reign. So far as it has power, it removes them, or restrains them, or chases them into darkness. They hate its light, and betake themselves to secret places. But its power over them is small; and the great reason is the prevalence of infidelity in that *so-called* Christian society—the infidelity either of the formalist, or of the scoffer, or of both.

I hasten to make a third and last observation on this

subject, namely, That the benevolent efforts of Christians and Christian churches to benefit the world, though only partially successful, or, indeed, though complete failures, are impressive attestations of the truth and excellence of their religion.—The lessons of the meek and lowly Saviour—"the king of righteousness and peace"—have done little as yet to put a stop to war among the peoples bearing his name; but they have done much to "humanise the conduct of wars," and mitigate the worst sufferings and horrors inseparable from that great scourge of the nations.—Christianity has not in every place to which it has come banished slavery, or put a stop to slave-dealing. The more shame to those nominally Christian nations which in this matter so fearfully belie its spirit! But it has, in this land at least, completely changed public opinion on the subject, and doomed both slavery and the slave trade to ultimate and entire extinction. It has originated a spirit—inaugurated a crusade, which we believe will never cease till slavery be put in the same category with robbery, and manstealing with murder. And though it had not done even this, the self-denying efforts and sacrifices of British Christians in the cause of anti-slavery are sufficient attestation of the aspect which their religion presents, and the spirit which it inspires.—Christian missions to the heathen, in our days, have as yet, in appearance, made small impression on the state of the world. Infidelity jeers and scoffs at them as hopeless and visionary. But they have at least demonstrated that the old spirit which once "turned the world upside down," is not even yet dead; they indicate a renewal of its youth; and they display that it is both a benevolent and a daring spirit. No other religion ever proposed or attempted the spiritual conquest of the whole world—at least by similar means.

No other—certainly no form of infidelity—ever sent forth such self-denying and intrepid benefactors of mankind, as the pioneers and agents of modern Christian missions. Nor has any other ever induced the masses of its adherents to labour and pray and give—devoting cheerfully thousands of precious lives, and millions of precious treasure—for the spiritual well-being of the most distant, and degraded, and even unknown tribes of the common brotherhood of man.

Let the infidel, then, candidly consider these things ; let him remark also how naturally science, and civilisation, and civil liberty, seem to attend the footsteps of Christianity, and flourish under its auspices—then reciprocally lending their aid to its benign efforts for the elevation of man ; and let him say whether all this be consistent with the idea that Christianity is a wicked imposture, and the history of its founder, Jesus Christ, a lying fable ? Surely it would be more rational to believe that the noon-day sun is a false and diabolical illusion, or the moon and stars, “ which are a beauty and a mystery,” the work of charms,

“ And black enchantments, the magician’s art.”

Surely it is the dictate of sound reason and common sense, as well as Christian experience, that, as the sagacious Fuller concludes, “ Christianity is a tree of life, whose fruit is immortality ; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

In conclusion, let me earnestly guard the young, and especially young men, against the society of men of infidel minds, and against the shallow but specious sophistries by which they endeavour to support their false and ruinous theories : and the same warning may be directed against infidel books. One of these sophis-

tries is, that man is not responsible for his religious belief: in other words, that there is no such thing as religious truth—no difference between it and falsehood. For surely if there be such a thing as truth, and if it be within an individual's reach, it must be both his interest and duty to attain the knowledge of it, and think and act in accordance with it. To say otherwise is to say that the light of reason is but darkness, and the distinction between good and evil a "mockery, a delusion, and a snare." If man is not responsible for his religious belief, neither can he be for any other kind of belief; for all belief rests on the same principles of human nature. And if he be not responsible for his belief, neither can he be for his conduct; otherwise, it must often be his duty to be a hypocrite—it must be his duty to put on a cloak of hypocrisy and act in opposition to his real sentiments. And let me say, without designing any offence, that, however great the outcry which avowed infidels make about religious hypocrites and pharisees, they are themselves not free of this kind and degree of hypocrisy. For once that the sincere Christian (for I defend not the mere formalist, who is both a practical infidel and habitual hypocrite) falls into it, I can have little doubt that the infidel goes into it, with his eyes open, ten times. For how often does he, in Christian society, for the sake of gain or reputation, keep his infidelity under a cloak, and show a temporary respect for that revealed religion which he esteems a falsehood and a pest. Nay, I fear, he is in danger of a double hypocrisy. For when in the midst of his chosen associates he puts on a boldness which he does not feel—openly reviling the things at which he secretly trembles; and when again in general society he shows a measure of external respect for a religion which he internally hates,—is he not in two ways *acting*

a part? Has he not, Janus-like, two faces? and are not both of them false faces?

"Think'st thou religion only has the mask?
Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,
Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, fail.
When visited by thought (thought will intrude),
Like him they serve, they tremble, and believe.
Is there hypocrisy so foul as this?
So fatal to the welfare of the world?"¹

Be it remembered here that, when we speak of the responsibility of man for his religious belief, we speak of responsibility to God alone—not of responsibility to fellowmen; and we have in eye also a responsibility limited or modified by the individual's ability, means, and opportunities of coming to the knowledge of the truth. We go as far as any infidel goes, or can wish to go, in denying man's accountableness to man for his religious opinions or faith. No man or set of men has any rational or divine authority to sit in judgment on the religious creed of another man—who has not submitted himself to that judgment—or to subject him to any kind or measure of punishment for his belief. The Christian and the infidel are on a level in this respect. The Christian can no more authoritatively judge and condemn the infidel, than the infidel the Christian. And O how desirable that this were better understood and more thoroughly acted on by both!—But when we turn our eye from man to God; when we think of Him who is the Creator and Preserver of men, the Source of reason and the Fountain of truth—"the God of the spirits of all flesh;" when we think of that "God and Judge of all" who "requires truth in the inward parts," and who reveals His righteous judgments alike in the thunders of Sinai and in the whispers of the natural con-

¹ Young.

science, saying, "Cursed be he who confirmeth not all the words of *My Law*, to do them;" and when we think of His Law that takes cognisance of the thoughts and intents of the heart—of all the operations of the inner man, as well as the actions of the outer man—a law so "exceeding broad" that "it reaches and comprehends the whole extent of all things in which there is the distinction of right and wrong—good and evil;"¹—then we are compelled to hold that the responsibility of man—every man—for his religious belief is most strict, most sure, most self-evident. The infidel maxim, that he is not responsible, is too flimsy for argument, too atheistic for being acted on. Let the infidel carefully search his own heart and life, and he will find, we doubt not, that he is obliged to contradict and disavow this maxim every day. The truth is, his efforts to maintain it are but a vain and deceitful attempt to escape from an obligation which he cannot but feel, but which is distasteful to his natural and wicked heart—the obligation to examine into the evidences of revealed truth, and to receive it, and act upon it, accordingly. It is a covert, and therefore cowardly attempt to dull his actual sense of responsibility for his false belief, by hood-winking conscience, and ignoring the authority and casting off the fear of a personal God.—And this brings us to the root and essence of the whole matter: "The fool says in his heart, No God! We are our own"—our lips are our own, our hearts, our consciences, our reason are our own—"Who is Lord over us?" Beware, O young man! beware, of such thoughts and feelings as these! They are the symptoms of guilty passion; they are the sign-posts to everlasting perdition!

¹ Foster.

III.

The Socinian Opinion.

ANOTHER, stranger and more wicked still,
With dark and dolorous labour, ill applied
With many a gripe of conscience, and with most
Unhealthy and abortive reasoning,
That brought his sanity to serious doubt,
'Mong wise and honest men, maintained that He,
First Wisdom, Great Messiah, Prince of Peace,
The Second of the uncreated Three,
Was nought but man, of earthly origin :
Thus making void the sacrifice divine,
And leaving guilty men God's holy law
Still unatoned, to work them endless death.

POLLOCK.

Text.

John ix. 35-38. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: A rational Christian—The Socinian opinion—Its rise—The name "Unitarian" neither distinctive nor appropriate—The place of Reason in the interpretation of Scripture—The question Whether Jesus Christ was a mere man, or more than a man—Priestley—Channing. INQUIRY I. Whether it be rational to suppose that two natures may be united in one person—The decision of the Heathen world on this question—The Jewish world—The Christian world—Milton, Locke, Newton, Clarke. INQUIRY II. Whether it be scriptural to think of Jesus Christ as having two natures—His pre-existence—Testimony of the Old Testament—Of John the Baptist—Of Jesus himself—John viii. 58—Socinian glosses—Testimony of the Spirit—John i. 1-18—The old and new Socinian interpretations. INQUIRY III. What observation and experience teach on the subject—Fuller's "Comparison." CONCLUSION.

III.

THE SOCINIAN OPINION.

THE poor but strong-minded man, of whom we have so graphic a record in the ninth chapter of John's gospel, has always appeared to us the *beau idéal* of a RATIONAL CHRISTIAN. Though he had never seen Jesus, he had, on the ground of the miracle performed on himself, believed in Him as "a prophet"—not "a sinner," an impostor—but a true messenger from God. This belief he had stoutly and rationally maintained, in opposition to all the authority and threatenings of the Jewish council, before which he was examined, so as to silence all the learned rabbis in it. He was therefore "cast out"—excommunicated from the church, and subjected to all the civil and religious disabilities which that sentence then involved. But he lost nothing. "The good Shepherd" sought and "found" the wandering sheep, and brought it into his own fold. Jesus revealed himself to him as the "Son of God;" and the poor man, having already acknowledged him as a prophet, hesitated not to believe in and confess him, in this character also. He confessed him both in words and deeds: "he said, Lord I be-

lieve; and he worshipped him.”¹ Socinians, whose opinion concerning Jesus Christ we now propose to consider, are ambitious to be styled *Rational Christians*: they will truly deserve the honourable title when, with this man’s rational conduct before them, they “go and do likewise.”

The opinion of Socinians concerning Jesus Christ is that he was a *mere man*. They acknowledge him to have been a divine messenger and the Messiah, but they deny that he had any other or higher nature than the human. Now, it is worthy of being remarked and remembered that, amid the vast variety of heresies—heresies especially in regard to the person of Christ—which arose in primitive times, there does not appear to have been any considerable sect or party, *worthy of the name of Christians*, who entertained the opinion that Jesus was a mere man. There was indeed a class of persons called Ebionites who are supposed to have held this opinion; but they seem rather to have been mongrel Jews, than heretical Christians. They continued to adhere to Moses; and though they mingled some parts of the morality of Christianity with the rites of Judaism, and were willing, in some sense, to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, they repudiated with disdain the doctrine of the apostles, and especially hated the anti-Judaizing teaching of Paul. Another small party appeared at Rome, about the beginning of the third century, called Monarchians, who are also

¹ The word translated “*worshipped*,” in John ix. 38, is that which the New Testament writers generally, and John in particular, employ to describe the highest kind of worship, viz., that which is paid to God only; as in Matt. iv. 10; John iv. 24; Rev. iv. 10; xix. 4, 10; xxii. 9, etc. If this word then was properly used in John ix. 38, we have in it the testimony of the man who offered the worship, of the Evangelist who recorded it, and of the Saviour who received it, that the highest kind of worship—the worship paid to God only—was *due* to Jesus Christ.

reputed to have been of this opinion concerning Jesus Christ. But who or what were they? The followers of one Theodotus a learned tanner of Byzantium who, having, to avoid persecution, apostatized from Christ, afterwards sought to vindicate himself by the miserable subterfuge that he had not apostatized from *God*, but only from a *man*. It is not denied that there were various other individuals and small parties (such as Paul of Samosata and his followers) whose opinions less or more nearly coincided with Socinianism; but only that, with the exception of the Ebionites and Monarchians, no *considerable* party arose holding this opinion. If Socinians deem it an honour to be descended, ecclesiastically, from either of these parties, no one, I presume, will be disposed to question their claim.¹

It was not till about the middle of the sixteenth century of the Christian era that Socinianism obtained any place or prominence in Christendom. Then the Reformation had released the minds of men from the bondage of Rome, and brought all the doctrines of the ancient creed into question and discussion. Sects and heresies of all kinds sprung up like mushrooms. Many seemed to think that it was a sufficient reason for rejecting any religious opinion that it had always been a part of the Romish system, and that the further they went from

¹ Owen calls Ebion the "Judaizing Ebion," and quotes Epiphanius' description of him as having "the beastliness of the Samaritans, the name of the Jews, the opinion of the Nazarenes, and the wickedness of the Carpocratians."—*Vind. Evangel. Pref.*—Semler says of the Ebionites, that "they were very tenacious of the Mosaic ceremonies, and more inclined to the Jews than the Gentiles, though they admitted the Messiahship of Jesus in a very low and Judaizing manner. They held in execration the doctrine of the Apostle Paul."—Rosenmüller doubts whether the Ebionites could be justly reckoned Christians.—Of Theodotus, Owen says, that "having once denied Christ, he was resolved to do so always;" and contemporary authors described him as the "leader and father of this *God-denying* apostasy"—"the first who said that Christ was a mere man"—*Pye Smith's Test.*, vol. ii.; *Mosheim's Ch. Hist.*, 2d Cent.; and "*Commentaries*," vol. ii., p. 195; *Horsley's Tracts*, *passim*.

Rome they came the nearer to truth. The Scriptures, so long withheld from the people by the Romish priesthood, were only beginning to regain their rightful place and influence; and what wonder that, in these circumstances, deadly errors should arise?

Among these, one of the most deadly was that which still survives under the name of *Socinianism*. It was first propagated in Poland under various leaders, but chiefly by two learned men of the name of *Socinus*—uncle and nephew. It soon spread to other countries of Europe, and has still considerable numbers of adherents in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland, and also in Britain and the United States of America. Socinians now generally call themselves *Unitarians*; but this name is neither distinctive nor appropriate. It is not *distinctive*; for, as meant to imply that they believe in the unity of God, it belongs to Jews and Mohammedans, to Sabellians and Swedenborgians, as well as to them. Nay deists, on the one hand, and all classes of orthodox Christians, on the other, have as good right to it as Socinians. They all hold the unity of the Godhead as the first principle of their belief.—Nor is the appellation *appropriate* to the Socinians, any more than distinctive; it does not describe *them* accurately, any more than distinguish them from others. Besides denying the divinity of Christ, and the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, they deny also all that is commonly esteemed peculiar and precious in the Christian system. They deny, for instance, the doctrine of original sin, or of the fall of man; they deny the doctrines of the atonement, of divine influence, of justification by faith, of the proper immortality of the soul, and of eternal punishments. Thus they reduce Christianity almost to the level of deism or Mohammedanism. Their proper designation, as denying the doctrine of

the Trinity, would be *Anti-trinitarians*; or, as holding that of the simple humanity of Christ, *Humanitarians*—which name some of them are said to assume; but all of them, as we have hinted, are ambitious to be known by the proud and invidious title of *Rational Christians*.

And this calls us to remark, further, that all or most of their errors and peculiarities may be traced to the place they assign to reason in the interpretation of Scripture and the formation of their religious opinions. They profess to believe in Scripture as true, and partly inspired; but they maintain, at the same time, that the inspired men were fallible teachers of truth, and that even Christ himself fell into mistakes. They contend, therefore, that the dictates of revelation must always be brought to the test of human reason, and be received or modified or rejected according to its decisions.—Now, if by this they meant that that power or process of the human mind, which we call reason—by which we examine and compare statements of doctrine or of fact, as well as their evidence, so as to come to a just apprehension of their meaning and truth—that the reason of man, in this sense, was to be freely employed in the examination and interpretation of Scripture,—then, no doubt, their principle would be sound, and their practice commendable. All interpreters whatever bring Scripture to the test of reason in this way. Scripture itself commands them to do so:—"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." But when we find that by reason, Socinians commonly mean certain preconceived opinions which they suppose to be demonstrated by the light of nature without, or derived from some imaginary light within the soul of man,—then we must protest that to subject Scripture to the test of human reason, in this sense, is both irrational and unsafe. Why?—*First*, because there is no infallible standard for

what is rational in this sense. The opinion which one man pronounces highly rational, another will pronounce grossly irrational, and absurd. This holds even in respect to common, earthly things; and how much more will it hold in respect of heavenly things? The peasant thinks that he sees the Sun revolving round the Earth; and he maintains, therefore, the opinion that it does so to be a rational opinion. The philosopher, on the other hand, can prove that the Earth revolves round the Sun; and he therefore maintains the opposite opinion to be alone rational. The dweller near the poles sees water in a solid state; he walks on its surface, and builds his hut both *on* it and *of* it. The dweller at the equator never saw water in this state; and he would ridicule the assertion that it could be employed in either of these ways. Who then shall decide for us what is, and what is not rational, especially in religion? Who shall collect for us the suffrages of the human race, and thus determine by the majority of votes whether any opinion be rational or the reverse?—whether it be in accordance with the revelations of nature *without*, or the radiations of the supposed light *within* the soul of man?

But, *secondly*, even though this could be done, and an established creed of rational religion, to which all men would assent, drawn up, surely it would be most presumptuous and preposterous to employ this creed as a limit or a test of the revelations of God. Must the Eternal mind—the fountain of all truth—reveal nothing but what the human mind, “which is but of yesterday,” has previously discovered for itself? Or must the All-wise God take heed that everything which he reveals shall coincide exactly with the previous decisions of foolish, fallible man? Is it beyond the power of God either to correct or enlarge these discoveries and decisions of human reason? To say so would evidently be

to say, in other words, that man is wiser than God, and that a divine revelation can be of no use to man. He knows already all that he requires to know—all that he *can* know—all that God can tell him; and a revelation from God is either an impossibility or an impertinence! Yes, thus presumptuous and preposterous is the sentiment that divine revelation must be brought to the test of human reason, in the sense in which human reason is often understood and spoken of; for it virtually involves the essence of atheism. The highest possible exercise of created reason—the reason even of an unfallen angel or archangel—is to receive with unquestioning docility and cordial acquiescence, as soon as it is understood, whatever God has revealed, and to glory in it as “the very truth most sure.” “Understand ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, *shall not He know?*”¹

But let us come to the question more immediately before us:—*Whether*, as Socinians think, *Jesus Christ was a mere man?* or, *Whether*, as all others who call themselves by the name of Christ hold, *he was more than man?*—The question is not, *Whether* he was truly man? for this is affirmed by all modern sects and parties. Nor is it, at present, *Whether* he was a Divine person? for this is not the question, properly speaking, between us and the *Socinians*. It is more directly the question between us and the *Arians*. Jesus Christ might have been more than human, and yet not have been divine. The sole question before us at present is, *Was he, or was he not, simply a man?*

¹ Pa. xciv. 8-10.

Now this is a question, plainly, which ought to be settled—which *can* be settled, only by divine revelation.—What saith the Scripture on the subject? What said the Old Testament scriptures about the person of the Messiah, when they predicted his coming?—for Socinians believe Jesus Christ to have been the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. What said the voices from heaven about him when they pointed him out to men? What said John the Baptist, and Jesus himself, when they testified who he was and whence he came? And what said the Spirit by the apostles of Christ, when he also testified of him, “taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto them?”—These are evidently the questions which are to be asked and answered, in order to the settlement of this matter; and we might safely decline to say a single word as to the person of Jesus Christ, save in the way of asking, and endeavouring to answer them. Christ himself virtually precludes us from taking up the question in any other way:—“No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”

But Socinians arrest our progress here, and protest against listening to the voice of Scripture, by alleging that the doctrine of the two natures in the one person of Jesus Christ, like that of the three persons in the one Godhead, is a contradiction. “It is an absurdity,” they say, “and no scripture can prove it to be true; for it is contrary to the dictates of human reason.” This argument was expressly used against the doctrine of the Trinity by Dr. Priestley, the coryphæus of the English Socinians of last century,¹ and it is substan-

¹ “The doctrine of the Trinity, if it had been found there (in the Scriptures), it would have been impossible for any reasonable man to believe, as it implies a contradiction which no miracles can prove.”—*Priestley's Hist. of E. O.*: quoted by *Pye Smith*.

tially employed, on the subject of the two natures of Christ, by Dr Channing of America, the most eloquent, and plausible, and dangerous, of the Socinian writers of the present century: I say the most dangerous; for, with a great show of candour, he continually misrepresents the views of trinitarians, and employs such *old* phraseology as "the divine nature of Christ, the sonship of Christ, the redemption of Christ," altogether in a *new* sense. After caricaturing the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, Dr Channing pronounces it "an enormous tax on human credulity—involving gross absurdity." Now let us inquire for a little, whether it is so or not:—let us inquire

I.

Whether it be rational to believe that two different natures may be united in one person?

I ask *not*, you will observe, What reason says of the person of Jesus Christ? for that is a question which reason cannot answer; but What it says of the abstract question of the possibility or impossibility—the rationality or irrationality, of the union of two different natures in one person?—Granting that natures superior to the human (whether angelic, or super-angelic, or divine) exist, the question is, Would it "involve gross absurdity," or lay "an enormous tax on human credulity," to be told that some possessor of one of these superior natures had taken upon him the nature of man, so as to manifest the properties of both natures in one person? Have we any means of answering this question, and what is the answer which human reason returns? What reply would universal humanity return to such a question?

Ask, first, the *Heathen world*: inquire what is the

decision, on this point, of the human mind when destitute of divine revelation. God forbid, that we should compare the "great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," with the dreams of heathens as to the incarnations of their divinities! but to the question now before us, *Whether a being of superior nature might not rationally be conceived to appear on earth in the nature and form of man?*—these dreams of the whole heathen world seem to reply, '*Most certainly he might*: the idea is not irrational; it is not absurd. Such an appearance of a divine person is on the other hand a very possible, and unspeakably desirable thing. O that we had a visible, a tangible, a conversible Deity!'—The truth is that this idea of the manifestation of gods in human form, so far from being abhorrent to the natural reason of men, has been so wide spread a thought among heathen nations that we must trace its existence (like that of the idea of atonement by sacrifice) either to primeval revelation, or to some original principle deeply and firmly laid in the moral constitution of human nature.

Ask, next, the *Jewish world*: inquire what decision the human mind under the light of Old Testament revelation gave as to the question of the possible union of two natures in one person. And here again the answer is plain. In so far as the Old Testament Jews understood their own Scriptures, they must have believed that two natures were to be united in the person of Messiah; for, as we shall afterwards see, this was plainly foretold in regard to him. And even independently of this fact, the idea was sufficiently brought before their minds in the records of the many appearances of God or angels, in the human form, during the early periods of their national history. These appearances, indeed, were not real incarnations; but they were shadows or pictures of the incarnation of superior natures; they

were temporary exemplifications of how God or angels could be conceived to appear and act in human form—as clothed with human flesh. And how then did Jewish reason receive such records? How did it, for instance, treat the story of three angels appearing to Abraham, accepting of his hospitality—eating and drinking at his table—conversing with him as men, while yet one of them displayed the omniscience, and exercised the authority of Jehovah? Did it reject the story as imposing “an enormous tax on human credulity”—as “involving gross absurdity,” and not to be believed, though found in Scripture? No, verily, the Jewish mind rejoiced in this and such like records as *true*, and as part of the very glory of their fathers and their nation.

Ask, again, the *Christian world*: ask the reason of man under the noon-day light of New Testament revelation, what it thinks of two natures being united in one person: and what is the answer? Why, all sections of the Christian world, orthodox and heterodox—all the churches, Eastern and Western, Popish and Protestant,—answer as with one voice: ‘We see no absurdity—no irrationality, in the idea. On the other hand, we thoroughly believe that the person of Jesus Christ was thus constituted; and though we cannot pretend to explain the manner of the union of the two natures in his one person, we can and do believe the fact: and it is our wonder and joy—the subject of our admiration, and the source of our hope! We believe that he “who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, was declared also to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;” and that thus “David’s son was also David’s Lord—the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star!”’

Once more, there is another party still which, though

included in the last-mentioned section of the human race, we may ask to give an answer to this question : I mean some of the greatest thinkers of the Christian world, and of later times—some of the masters of reason, if we may so call them, to whom the question has been submitted, and who have come to a decision on the subject. Take, for instance, John Milton, John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Samuel Clarke. I have a particular reason for selecting these four names ; but, independently of this reason, it would certainly be difficult to select four names greater for profound, vigorous, and independent thought. As interpreters of Scripture (though they all attempted the work) these men were *not* great ; but as rational thinkers, they have been rivalled by few and surpassed by none in modern times. And ~~they~~ they were great too, it will be observed, in different fields of reason :—*Milton*, in Poetry and Politics ; *Locke*, in Metaphysics ; *Newton*, in Mathematics and Physics ; and *Clarke*, in these last, as well as in what may be called Metaphysical Theology. The particular reason I have for selecting these four great men is that they were all less or more unsound (in our estimation) in their views of the person of Christ, being Arians or Semi-arians ; and also that Channing has most vauntingly spoken of the first three of them as “intellectual suns before whom the stars of self-named orthodoxy hide their diminished heads.” He had forgotten doubtless such men as Bacon and Butler, Owen and Howe, not inferior as masters of reason, and some of them far superior as divines and interpreters of Scripture. But let that pass. The first-mentioned great men, though not believers in the supreme divinity of Christ, must have thought much and deeply of the question of the union of two natures in his one person : and what is their answer to this question ? Certainly,

that the doctrine was, in their judgment, rational and true; that instead of "involving absurdity," or imposing "an enormous tax on human credulity," it was the doctrine of Scripture, and agreeable to reason. So that Channing's own "intellectual suns"—his own chosen interpreters of reason, pronounce his language, and the creed of his party, to be presumptuous and false.

Thus, then, we have, in a manner, taken the suffrage of the human race on a question which that suffrage alone can decide; and we have found that, with the exception of a few self-constituted and self-conceited rationalists, all, as if with one voice, proclaim that to the mind of man there is nothing inconceivable, nothing offensive—no insurmountable difficulty—in the supposition of two natures being so united in one person, that the properties of both shall be harmoniously displayed by him. All admit this union to be mysterious, and inexplicable by the reason of man; but none, save Socinians, contend that it is opposed to that reason. "Confessedly *great* is this mystery of godliness;" but there is no self-contradiction, or self-evident absurdity, in it.—We go on to inquire,

II.

Whether it be scriptural to think of Jesus Christ as having two natures in his one person, and being, therefore, more than a mere man?

In one point of view this question is so easily answered, that it might seem altogether unnecessary even to entertain it; but, in another point of view, it is difficult to answer, at least, in short compass: the difficulty being to select from the abundance and variety of the evidence which Scripture contains only so much as may suffice to give an adequate impression of the

clearness and certainty of its decision on the subject. In these circumstances, let us confine our attention to a single point, namely, the *Pre-existence of Christ*; and let us adduce only a single statement on this point from the Old Testament, one from the testimony of John the Baptist, one from the words of Christ himself, and one from the witness of the Spirit by the apostles. This ought to be sufficient to satisfy the mind of any believer in the word of God; for if all these witnesses can be shown to combine in representing Jesus Christ as having had an intelligent existence before "he came in the flesh"—before his birth in Bethlehem, his possession of another nature than the human must be unquestionable: for no one, now-a-days, will contend, I presume, that a *mere man* could have had such an existence. Our argument is not with those who receive in any form the doctrine of a *metempsychosis*, but with those who hold that the existence of a mere man is to be dated from the time of his *birth*.

(1.) Now, as to the Old Testament scriptures, all who are familiar with their bibles will at once remember the striking language of the prophet Micah, in regard to the Messiah, specifying his birth-place: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"¹ The concluding words admit of a more forcible rendering than this, namely, "*even he whose comings forth (or active proceedings) have been from eternity, from the days of the everlasting period.*"² It is hardly necessary to say a word as to the proof which this language affords of the pre-existence of Christ, and not only of his pre-existence, but of his existence from eternity. All sober in-

¹ Micah v. 2.

² Pye Smith's Test.

terpreters of Scripture, whatever their predilections may be, are constrained to admit its force; and even Socinians, so far as I know, despairing of either turning or blunting its edge, are obliged to pass over it in silence.¹ This prediction is the more pointed and impressive that it connects the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Messiah with the specification of the place of his birth as a man; and it is the more convincing that it was the passage quoted by the chief priests and scribes, when Herod, on the coming of the wise men to Jerusalem, "gathered them together, and demanded of them where Christ [*i.e.*, the Christ] should be born."² It seems also to have been well known by the common people in Jerusalem, in the time of Christ, as relating to the Messiah;³ and the sounder of the Jewish writers still view it in the same light.⁴ How strong a testimony, then, of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, does it afford—only the more so that it was uttered more than 700 years before his appearance—and how strange that any professed believers in divine revelation should be able either to ignore or to resist that testimony! Can that be *rational*?

(2.) The language of John the Baptist comes next to be considered. He was a still more important witness of the truth about Jesus Christ than the Old Testament prophets, because he not only was nearer Christ

¹ "Micah here declares that the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem with respect to his human nature; but that, with respect to his Divinity, he should not be born, since he is from eternity."—*Castellio in loc.*—An author whose predilections would not have led him to this annotation had he not perceived the amplest room for it.—'Yea, from the days of eternity, *i.e.*, he has already existed from eternity, before his human birth.'—*Rosenm. in loc.*—Dr Priestley (in his notes on S.S.) admits that the person here predicted '*may be the Messiah*;' but upon this important feature in the description, he observes a deep silence."—*Pye Smith's Test.*, vol. I., p. 281,—5th Ed.

² Matt. ii. 4-6.

³ John vii. 42.

⁴ "The sounder Jewish interpreters regard this prediction as relating to the Messiah, and draw from it the doctrine of his Divine nature."—*Schoettg. Hor. Heb.* (Matt. II. 6).

but had a higher office than they. He was "a prophet and more than a prophet"—the "messenger of Christ sent before his face to prepare his way." "Among them that were born of women, there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."¹ And what then did John say of the pre-existence of Him whose way he was sent to prepare? You all, I doubt not, remember his clear and impressive language. Once, and again, and again, he proclaimed—"He that cometh after me is preferred before me; *for he was before me.* I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom you know not; he it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." And, seeing Jesus coming unto him, he said—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is preferred before me: *for he was before me.*"² This testimony not only proclaims the pre-existence of Christ, but also his supreme divinity, and his work of atonement for the sins of the world. Socinians indeed have argued that the words of John, "*he was before me,*" do not refer to priority of existence, but to superiority of rank. But how unmeaning would his language, in that case, be! Socinians would make John say that Jesus had been 'preferred before him,' *i.e., set above him; 'for He was already above him.'* How could one be placed before another, in the same sense in which he was already before him? And why too should the past tense of the verb *to be* have, in that case, been used? Had John meant that Jesus was preferred before him, because he was his superior, he would naturally have said, "He is preferred before me; for he *is* (not *was*) *my superior.*"³ And, in addition to

¹ Matt. xi. 11.

² John i. 15, 26-30.

³ I am aware that Dr Lardner has strenuously contended for this Socinian interpretation of John's language; but, besides that he was himself a Socinian,

this, in what possible sense could Jesus, if He was a mere man, and had no higher or prior nature than John, be his superior? and so much his superior, too, that John could say that he was not worthy to perform the meanest office for Him—even *that of unloosing the latchet of his shoe?* Surely this would have been gross flattery—fulsome and unmeaning adulation—together unworthy of a prophet of God, or of any man whatever, if Jesus had been a mere man—born after John, and therefore inferior to him in age—baptized by John, and thus consenting to appear, for the time, as his disciple! In a word, all these statements of John the Baptist would be unintelligible and self-contradictory, save on the supposition that he intended to assert both the pre-existence and the divine dignity of Jesus Christ.

(3.) Let us now come to the testimony of Jesus himself to his own pre-existence: and surely this was not a matter in regard to which even Socinians can *rationaly* suppose he might fall into a mistake. He must have known whether or not he had any intelligent existence prior to his birth as a man; and if he knew, we may be sure that he would speak the truth on the subject: as he said to the Jews, “Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come or whither I go.”¹ But which of Christ’s sayings about himself shall we choose? For they are so numerous and so plain, that any one of a score of passages might serve the purpose. There are, for instance, his many sayings at different times about his having “come

his argument is altogether futile. His translation of the parallel expression in John xv. 18, “The world hated me your *chief*,” as Campbell clearly shows, would make Christ *one of the apostles*; just as Paul, when he calls himself the *chief of sinners*, means of course that he is a *sinner*.

¹ John viii. 14.

down from heaven ;" his words to his disciples, before he suffered,—“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father ;” his prayer to God immediately after,—“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was ;” and that memorable saying to the Jews, on account of which they took up stones to stone him, even in the temple,—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”¹

Let us take the last, both because it is shortest, and because Socinians themselves have allowed that it is sufficient to settle the whole question ; and they have therefore made very strenuous efforts to make it speak in accordance with their own theory, or at least not in opposition to that theory.—Notice, then, how this saying of Christ was introduced. When he was reasoning with the unbelieving Jews, in the temple, about himself and them,—rebutting their malignant aspersions, and maintaining his intimate relation to God, and zeal for His honour—he had said, “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” This saying excited the Jews to intenser malignity ; and they asked him with contempt, “Art thou greater than Abraham who is dead ? and the prophets are dead, whom makest thou thyself ?” To which Jesus, among other things, replied, that “Abraham had seen his day and was glad.” On which the Jews, either wishing to cavil, or reasoning on the principle that if Abraham had seen Christ’s day, He must have seen Abraham’s, said, “*Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?*”² This question, plainly, was just a challenge on the subject of his *pre-existence*. As a man he was not yet, in their opinion, fifty years old (we know that he was not much more

¹ John xvi. 28 ; xvii. 5 ; viii. 58.

² John viii. 51-57.

than thirty)—‘Did he then mean to assert that he had existed in the time of Abraham, and had seen Abraham?’—Now, this question Jesus might have answered in two ways:—first, he might have evaded the challenge contained in it, by saying that they had taken up his words in a different sense from that in which he had used them—that they had either knowingly or unknowingly perverted them. This would have been true; and if he had not really existed in the days of Abraham, it is the answer which he was bound to give,—the only answer which, in consistency with truth, he could give. But secondly, instead of evading it, our blessed Lord, you will perceive, took up the challenge, and answered it both directly and solemnly:—“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS I AM.*” The Jews appear, plainly, to have understood the answer as containing a claim not only to *pre-existence*, but to *self-existence*—a claim to be regarded as the eternal and self-existent I AM; and treating him, therefore, as a blasphemer, “they took up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.”

What now shall we say of this testimony of Christ himself, as to his own pre-existence? I have no hesitation in saying that it appears to me, what it appeared to the Jews, an assertion of his eternal *self-existence*: meaning that he (Jesus) was the I AM, and that he certainly existed therefore before the time of Abraham. Some orthodox interpreters, however, are not willing to push the meaning of the words this length, and would understand them as if they had been ‘Before Abraham was, *I was*—before Abraham existed, *I existed.*’ Now admitting that this *may* be the meaning, the sense, so far as the doctrine of Christ’s pre-existence is concerned, is not altered, but is, on the other hand, only

more directly and formally brought out : Jesus Christ existed before Abraham existed, and therefore must have possessed another and higher nature than the human.

But the Socinians object to both these interpretations of the words, and labour, as we have said, to make them speak in accordance with their own sentiments. How do they accomplish this difficult task ?—I answer, the first Socinus discovered or invented a very ingenious and wonderful way of accomplishing it ; and the second Socinus was so charmed with it, that he spoke of it as a new revelation—a “communication in answer to prayer from Christ himself :” for *inspiration*, it would appear, did not offend them, if it but spoke their sentiments ! What was this way ? Socinus alleged that Jesus meant to say, ‘*Before Abraham has become Abraham, I am :*’ i.e., before Abraham had become what his name implies—“*The father of many nations*”—(which he became only when the Gentiles were brought by apostolic preaching to believe in Christ)—before this time (Jesus says) “I am.” No doubt of it ! The man Christ Jesus, though not yet fifty years old, was before Abraham in this sense ; and would have been though he had not been fifty days, or fifty hours old ! And so also were all his hearers ! So that if this far-fetched and mystical idea had been intended, and had been understood by the Jews, instead of taking up stones to cast at Christ, they might, far more innocently and properly, have echoed his words, and said, each for himself, ‘*So am I—So am I !*’ Yes, and every little bird that made its nest among the turrets of the house of God, or fluttered through its courts, might, if it could have chirped out the same words, ‘*So am I !*’ For both existed before Abraham became Abraham, or the father of many nations : i.e., before the mystical import of his name was verified in the calling and faith of the

Gentiles!—Pray, what kind of system must *that* be (a rational system, truly!) which requires, or is built on, interpretations of the word of God like this? And what kind of men must *they* have been (rational Christians must we call them?)—what respect could they have had for the character of Jesus Christ, “the faithful and true witness”—who supposed that he could descend to such trifling, not to say shuffling, as an answer like this to the question of the Jews would have been?

I would not have you to understand that Socinians, now-a-days, are satisfied with this wonderful discovery of the fathers and founders of their sect. They have got another gloss upon the words, which, I believe, they more generally approve of now; and so far as I know it is the only other way they have discovered of making these words consistent with their views. They allege that our blessed Lord meant to say that, before the time of Abraham, he (the Messiah) existed *in the divine purpose*; in other words—*He did not exist at all, at that time, but God had purposed that he should afterwards exist.* No doubt of it! we again say: God had not only then purposed but also promised that Messiah should exist, and the divine choice of Abraham, and all the divine promises to Abraham, had a reference to *Him*. But what modern Socinians gain by this new gloss, I am unable to understand. The answer of Christ would have been, in this view of it, as unmeaning in itself, and as unworthy an evasion of the question of the Jews, as in the former view. For, on the principle that God has from the beginning fore-ordained whatsoever exists or comes to pass, the hearers of our Lord, and the little birds might again have replied, ‘And we too existed in the divine purpose before the time of Abraham!’ Nay, independently of that principle (which the Socinians

repudiate) the hearers of Christ, at least, might have returned this reply ; for the Jews, the *natural* seed of Abraham, had, as certainly as Messiah and the *spiritual* seed, a place in the divine purpose. The two seeds necessarily went together, *in the purpose*,—Messiah being the link between them,—being the appointed *offspring* of the natural and *root* of the spiritual. Above all, the saying of Christ, in this view of it, would certainly have been as innocent of anything approaching to blasphemy as any saying could well be. What the Jews could have found in it to offend them, or excite their rage against our Lord to such a pitch, is truly mysterious.—This saying, then, beyond all controversy, proclaims most pointedly the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

(4.) Let us now, in the last place, consider shortly one of the testimonies of the inspired Apostles to the pre-existence of Jesus. These are both numerous and explicit. Let us take one of the last which was written, and written, too, we have reason to believe, less or more directly, for the very purpose of meeting and counteracting the heretical tendencies, on the subject of the person, office, and work of Christ, which were beginning to show themselves before the last of the apostles was removed from the world: I mean the preamble or introduction of the gospel according to John—John i. 1-18.¹

I shall have occasion to refer to this passage in a future discourse,² and shall not, therefore, dwell on it now. I merely remark that it is plainly a *historico-theological account* (so to call it) of the pre-existence and works of Christ,—his “goings forth, or active proceedings”—in his higher nature, down to the time of his manifesta-

¹ Comp. John xx. 31; 1 Jo. i. 1-3; II. 18-26.

² Cath. Opin., Part 1st, Prop. III.

tion as Man. Under the designation "the word," (a name which John repeatedly gives to Christ, in his other writings,¹) he speaks of his eternal relation to the Father (ver. 1, 2); of his being the Creator of all things (ver. 3); of his being the appointed Saviour or Salvation of men (ver. 4, 5); of his being about to be manifested in this character in the days of John the Baptist (ver. 6-9); of his having been in the world before that—unrecognised by the world (ver. 10); of his having resided, under the Old Testament dispensation, among his own people—only partially received or acknowledged by them (ver. 11-13); and then (ver. 14) of his being *made flesh* and dwelling among men, "full of grace and truth." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."—"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

Such seems to be so far the plain, connected, common-sense view of the purport and contents of this remarkable passage of holy writ. It is certainly strange that, in the face of it, any one should deny that Jesus Christ had an intelligent existence prior to his appearance as Man, or maintain that he was nothing more than simply a man. Yet the Socinians do so. And how then do they manage to interpret this passage (the inspiration of which, so far as I know, they have never questioned) in consistency with their views? I answer that the older Socinians had a dream of their own about Christ's being taken up, like Mohammed, into Heaven, prior to the commencement of his ministry,—for it would appear they could obtain revelations of fact as well as of doctrine, when their system required them; and they con-

¹ 1 Jo. i. 1; (v. 7) Rev. xix. 13. See Appendix, Note VI.

tended that it was to this *rapture*, and to his being the maker of all things in the *new and spiritual creation*, that this statement of the apostle referred: so that all this history must, after all, describe, not what took place *before*, but what took place *after* "the Word" had been "made flesh;"—an interpretation which, besides being a pure and impudent fiction, without the shadow of a foundation in other scriptures, confounds the order and destroys the connection of the whole passage. It were evidently better to cut it out altogether, and supply its place with a plain account of Christ's supposed rapture into paradise, than thus to pervert it.¹

Not satisfied with this dream, the modern Socinians have got a completely new view of the passage. They hold that John speaks in it of the pre-existence of their own god, or goddess, *Reason*—whether divine, or human reason, I know not,—whether reason as a process of mind, or reason as a system of opinions, I know not; but the *Word* they say is *Reason*,—and therefore the meaning is that 'in the beginning was *Reason*, and *Reason* was with God, and *Reason* was God; all things were made by him (*Reason*); and without him was nothing made that was made; and *Reason* was made flesh,' and so on!—Now to this (if any serious answer were necessary) I have only to say that if this *Reason*, so spoken of, was a *person*, then you have in this very gloss the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, under another name. For this pre-existing person, called *Reason*, "was made flesh," and dwelt on earth as the man Jesus Christ, "full of grace and truth;" and thus, still,

¹ This interpretation, as Dr Dick and others have noticed, makes the apostle repeatedly and solemnly affirm that Jesus Christ, the author of the new dispensation, *existed* at the beginning of that dispensation—"An important piece of intelligence truly! which we would not have known without the affirmation of the beloved disciple." Could Socinians themselves believe that an inspired apostle was guilty of such trifling?

Christ must have had more than one nature, and been more than simply a man. But if *reason*, here so spoken of, was not a *person* but a *thing*—whether that thing was a divine or human attribute, a process of mind, or a system of opinions—then you have only to read the passage with this idea in your minds (substituting *reason* for the *Word*) to be convinced that what John says of it defies all reason to comprehend; and that his mode of speaking of it violates the ordinary rules of grammar, and sets at nought the dictates of common sense: so much so, that I shrink from giving from a Christian pulpit such a travesty of the passage as this interpretation would bring out.¹

I conclude, then, that this passage of Scripture, like the others which I have cited, asserts the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and incontestably proves that he was possessed of two natures in one person, and was more than simply a man. The answer to the question, What saith the Scripture on this subject, then, is plain: it may be given in the language of another apostle, to which I shall have occasion in a future discourse to call your attention: Christ, the Son of God, is the “image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”²

¹ The above remarks apply also, in part at least, to Dr Lardner's strangely incongruous interpretation of “the Word,” which is, “God himself, or the wisdom and power of God, which is the same as God, even the Father, who is God alone,” etc. This would make the inspired apostle gravely tell us either that ‘God himself was with God, and was God,’ or that ‘the wisdom and power of God, which is the same as God, was with God, and was God’: i.e., evidently, that ‘God was, and at the same time was not, *Himself!*’

² Col. i. 15-17.

III.

What do observation and experience teach on the subject of the Socinian opinion concerning Jesus Christ? Or, what have been the common fruits of the Socinian system of religion, in those who have adopted it?

By their fruits, systems of opinion, as well as men, may be known; and though it is not easy to distinguish between the proper fruits of a system, and the peculiarities or defects of the persons who hold that system, yet, in so far as they can be thus distinguished, they will go far to show the truth or falsehood, the soundness or unsoundness, of the system from which they proceed.

On this inquiry, however, I shall not enlarge. Besides that I have been speaking of only a part of the Socinian system, I am unable to give you any results of my own observation or experience; and I choose rather to refer you to the books of those who have written upon the subject, than merely retail what they have written. I would particularly recommend those who have not done so, to read Andrew Fuller's well-known book on this question;¹ and I would especially invite the young to study carefully what is said in his last letter, on "the resemblance between Socinianism and infidelity, and the tendency of the one to the other." Socinianism has sometimes been spoken of as the "half-way house" to infidelity; but if my idea of it be correct, it must be considerably farther on than half-way. I hold it to be no better than infidelity under a cloak—baptized deism—only the more dangerous that it affects the name of Christianity, and, while making great pretences to candour and charity, labours to undermine the foundations of all revealed religion. Let the young beware of it then. I have spoken of but one of its doctrines; but

¹ "The Calvinistic and Socinian systems examined and compared as to their moral tendency; in a series of letters, addressed to the Friends of vital and practical religion."

that one is the root of all. The person of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian church, and the Rock of truth. Adopt the opinion that he was a mere man, and you must give up, sooner or later,—

First—all confidence in Scripture. On the Socinian scheme the inspiration of the Scriptures is a phrase without meaning, or a shadow without substance. The Socinian holds it in *words* but he denies it in *fact*. And I cannot but think that the conduct of the infidel, who casts away the Bible altogether, is at least more honest and honourable than that of the man who professes to reverence it, but at the same time erases or tampers with every word in it that does not square with his proud reason, or support his pre-conceived opinions.—

Next—you must renounce all idea of an atonement for sin, and all the hopes which the atonement of Christ is fitted to inspire. In the Socinian system there is no atonement. It repudiates and reviles the very thought of an atonement, as unworthy of God and unnecessary for man; and it mocks accordingly at all the piety which, from age to age, has been grafted on this thought. The cross of Christ, instead of being to the Socinian a source and subject of glorying, is “a stone of stumbling and rock of offence.”

Again—adopt the Socinian creed, and you must at once give up the wondrous thought—the great burden of divine revelation—that “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Socinian indeed talks much of the love of God, and of love to God, and boasts that he alone “knows and believes that God is love;” but if Scripture is to be trusted, he is mistaken—egregiously mistaken. He does not know what love—what the love of

God, is; for "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

In a word—adopt Socinianism, and you lose hold of all fixed religious principle, and, according to the deceitful winds and currents of the time, may drift on any error, or on universal scepticism. The anchor of the soul is gone; the chart and compass are thrown away; the sun of righteousness and the polestar of truth are alike blotted from the heavens; only by the predominating influences of earth and time can the frail bark of man be driven about or governed; and where it will land, who can tell? Dr Priestley himself was a lamentable warning on this point—a self-erected beacon to warn all, and especially the young, to avoid the course which he chose. He began, he says, a Calvinist, and that of the straitest sect. Afterwards he became an high Arian; next a low Arian; then a Socinian; and in a little time a Socinian of the lowest kind, by whom Christ was considered as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, and naturally as fallible and peccable as Moses, or any other prophet. And he says, further, that *he did not know when his creed would be fixed*. And no wonder! For on Socinian principles and modes of reasoning (those of Channing for instance) I think it would not be very difficult to show that the being of God, and the real existence of the visible creation, must both be very doubtful matters.—Of such men and their systems, then, I would have every young man to say, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!"

IV.

The Arian Opinion.

A THOUSAND seraphs strong and bright
Stand round the glorious Deity
But who among the sons of light
Pretends comparison with *Thee*?

Yet there is one of human frame,
Jesus, arrayed in flesh and blood,
Thinks it no robbery to claim
A full equality with God.

heir glory shines with equal beams,
Their essence is for ever one,
Though they are known by different names,
The Father God, and God the Son.

Then let the name of Christ our King
With equal honours be ador'd,
His praise let every angel sing,
And all the nations own *Him*, LORD.

WATTS.

Text.

Prov. xxx. 4: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?"

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: The warning of the text—The Arian opinion and controversy—The origin and character of the controversy in primitive times—Its revival during last century in England—Ireland—Scotland—Different modifications of Arianism—The particular point to be discussed. OBSERVATION I. Arianism not founded on Scripture—Manner in which Arians treat Scripture on this subject—Old Testament—New Testament—Various passages and expressions of Scripture considered. OBSERVATION II. Arianism opposed to Scripture—Passages ascribing eternal and necessary existence to Christ—His unity of essence and equality in power and glory with the Father. OBSERVATION III. Arianism unsettles Christianity, and reduces it to confusion. CONCLUSION—Death of Arius.

IV.

THE ARIAN OPINION.

“THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh,” now read—
“What is his name? and what is his Son’s name, if thou canst tell?”—may well be regarded as a solemn warning of the dangers that beset our course in discussing the subject of the present lecture. That subject calls us to consider the “name” both of the eternal Father, and the eternal Son, and to speak of such high themes as the unity of essence, and trinity of persons, in the Godhead; the supreme divinity and true humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; his equality with the Father in one respect, and his inferiority to the Father in another;—and who on earth can pretend adequately to comprehend, or even safely to examine into, such questions as these? We cannot comprehend fully the existence of even a worm of the dust; and how should we pretend to fathom that of him who “inhabits eternity,” and fills immensity? Can we compute the years of that eternity? Can we measure the dimensions of that immensity? If not, how can we take up the challenge, “What is his name, and what is his Son’s name?”—Our Lord himself may be said to have supported this warning of the wise man: “No man

knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." And observation and experience abundantly confirm the practical lesson of both—that such subjects ought to be treated with the utmost caution and humility, and with earnest desire for divine guidance ; for multitudes, we have reason to fear, "intruding" incautiously "into things not seen," "vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind," have thereby endangered or destroyed their own souls.

There is but one other observation I would make on the words of the text, before leaving them : namely, that, besides showing that Old Testament believers had the idea of a person to whom the name of the Son of God belonged in a peculiar, or proper sense, they make the *name*, or knowledge, of this Son of God as profound and unsearchable a mystery as that of the Father himself. So far, therefore, they plainly suggest that the Father and Son are one—one in nature, and equally infinite, incomprehensible, divine.

The subject of the present discourse is the ARIAN OPINION CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST. That opinion is, that, though more than a mere man, *he was a mere creature—the first and highest of creatures.*

It cannot be said of this, as was said of the Socinian opinion, that it does not appear to have been entertained in early times by any important sect or party *worthy of the name of Christian.* For though we should deny that name, in its full and proper sense, to those who were then called Arians, the denial would serve little purpose. We could not deny that they had a place in the Christian Church, or that they were able, by their numbers and influence, to originate a controversy in the Church which may well be characterised as

the greatest controversy of primitive times. Like a hurricane the Arian controversy swept over the whole Church, and for the best part of a century kept it in unceasing agitation and strife. Like an earthquake it shook the visible Church to its foundations, and went far to occasion the first great breach in its unity and strength. For there can be little doubt that the Arian controversy prepared the way for the separation which afterwards took place between the Eastern and the Western churches of Christendom—making the former, at the same time, a more easy prey to the delusions of the “false prophet,” and preparing the latter for becoming the pedestal of the “man of sin.”

It is foreign to my purpose, and would require much more time than is available, to give anything like even a general account of this great and disastrous controversy; but I may make one or two observations on the subject.—It arose in the beginning of the fourth century of the Christian era, and continued to rage less or more fiercely till towards the end of that century. The Christian Church had just achieved her first triumph over her first great antagonists, Judaism on the one hand, and Paganism on the other; and she might now have naturally anticipated a season both of undisturbed repose within, and of glorious progress without. But as it often happens in the State, that the termination of foreign war leaves the field open for civil broils and factions, so it happened in the Church. The precise phraseology of many important articles of her creed had not yet been fixed; different views of the language of Scripture on these subjects were entertained; and even as one result of past struggles both with Jewish theology and with Greek philosophy, seeds of heresy seem to have been widely diffused, and to have become deeply rooted in the minds

of many of the leaders and teachers of the Church. But what more than anything else, perhaps, tended to excite the fury, or at least to extend the influence, and prolong the continuance of the Arian controversy, was the circumstance that shortly before it, Constantine, the Roman Emperor, had assumed the profession of Christianity, had taken the Church under his protection, and had begun to intermeddle with her affairs.

Having, doubtless, little knowledge of the matters in dispute between the Arians and their opponents, and having, probably, less care about them, but being at the same time anxious for peace, Constantine sometimes favoured the one side, and sometimes the other,—thus only embroiling the question and the combatants the more. The same may be said of his successors in the empire, during the whole period of the controversy. Now Arius, and now Athanasius, his chief antagonist, was a favourite at Court,—the other being, meanwhile, subjected to threatenings and persecutions. No less than four times, during the course of his long and laborious career, was Athanasius banished by different emperors from his ministry and home; but as often he was restored by others, or through the love and devotion of his people. Thus the imperial court became a scene of religious discussion and intrigue. The affairs of the Church of Christ and the loftiest themes of divine revelation became the common talk, and, so to speak, the footballs of courtly chamberlains and eunuchs. “From them the agitation spread to the people of high rank in the empire; and then still lower down: so that,” as one historian expresses it, “a war of dialectics was carried on in every family,” and, as another relates, “the *Homoousion* (the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the persons of the Trinity) came to be discussed in

bakers' shops, at the tables of the money-changers, and even in the market for old clothes." "Ask a man," says he, "how many oboli anything comes to: he gives you a specimen of dogmatising on generated and un-generated being. Inquire the price of bread: you are answered, 'The Father is greater than the Son, and the Son subordinate to the Father.' Ask if the bath is ready: and you are answered, 'The Son of God was created out of nothing.'"¹ There may be, doubtless, something of caricature in such representations; but they must be taken as substantially true; and they may convince us of two things: 1st. How little *real help* the cause of Christian truth receives from the favour of earthly princes; and 2dly. That religious controversy, though necessary or unavoidable, is at best, like war, *a necessary evil*.

The Arian controversy, after remaining for a long course of ages almost dormant, was revived for a time, in England, in the early part of last century. Then Whiston, and Clarke, and Locke, and Peirce, and other learned men, both in the Church of England and among the Dissenters, became infected with the heresy, and laboured to maintain and defend it. The controversy was not of long continuance, but it left behind it most lamentable fruits; for, in consequence, the great body of the English Presbyterians—the representatives of the noble men who, in the times of the Commonwealth, formed the main strength of the Westminster Assembly of divines, and composed the admirable summaries of

¹ *Neander's Church Hist.*, vol. iv., p. 61.—The same historian quotes various sayings of the writers of that period, to the effect that, in the reign of Constantius, on account of the numerous synods which he convened, for the purpose of imposing his own religious (Arian) opinions on all, the business of the public conveyances was interrupted (the bishops travelling in the public vehicles and at the public expense), and public travelling brought almost to a stand.

Christian truth contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Larger and Shorter Catechisms—lapsed into Arianism and Socinianism: so that the name of Presbyterian, in England, has long been regarded as equivalent to Arian or Unitarian. Many of them have doubtless gone still further in the same direction, reaching the “lower deep” of deism, if not the “lowest deep” of atheism.

The same remarks may be made as to the same controversy in Ireland, about the middle of the last century. By means of it the Irish Presbyterians, commonly called the Synod of Ulster, became widely infected. In Scotland there has never been any public agitation on the subject, worthy of being mentioned; but at one time, we have reason to fear, many of the “Moderate” party in the Established church were less or more leavened with Arian as well as Socinian views. Thank God! that time has now gone by; and, so far as I am aware, none of the presbyterian churches of Scotland are now to be suspected of heresy on this subject. None of them, I trust, would now tolerate any departure, on the part of their ministry, from that great foundation of the Christian Church, the doctrine of the supreme divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, of which, as combined with that of his true humanity, the justly celebrated Owen has said that it is “the glory of the Christian religion, the basis and foundation which bears the whole superstructure, the root whereon it grows;” and of which a still greater than he has said, by the Spirit, “The pillar and ground of the truth, and, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

It is not necessary to detain you with any lengthened

account of the various modifications under which the Arian opinion concerning Jesus Christ has at different times been held. Truth is one; error is manifold. Some have held with Arius himself (from whom the name *Arian* was derived) that the pre-existing substance of Christ was created out of nothing; that it did not exist until it was created; and that this spiritual but created nature dwelt in the body of Jesus Christ in the place of a human soul; for other soul than this he had not: so that he was neither God nor man, but a kind of being altogether different from either and both. These may be called *Arians proper*.—Others, commonly called *Semi-Arians*, have held that the pre-existing nature of Christ was *generated, not created*; that it was of *a like substance* with that of the Father, but not the very same; and that it did not exist before it was thus generated. While others, (whom, for want of a better or more distinct name, we may denominate *Semi-semi-Arians*,) without saying anything of the substance of the Son of God, or the manner of his existence, have maintained that he derived his being from the Father by an act of the Father's incomprehensible power and will, so as to be not *self-existent*, or *necessarily existent*, but altogether dependent on the power and will of the self-existent, necessarily existent Father. This last, if at least I can understand it, was the doctrine of Dr Samuel Clarke and the other English Arians of last century.

Now, dismissing all such distinctions as unintelligible or vain, we join all these classes together as certainly denying the true and proper divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. For, as John Howe has plainly and emphatically remarked, "Whatsoever is *necessarily*, is God; but "whatsoever is *by dependence on the Divine will*, is creature:" in other words, whatever exists by necessity of nature is divine; but whatever does not exist by

such necessity, but by dependence on the will of God, "that is all creature." To say therefore that Christ, in his pre-existent nature, came into being by the power and will of the Father is to say that he was, and is, *a mere creature*. He might, in that case, never have existed at all. He may again cease to exist. His existence depends on the will of another. He cannot, in any proper sense, be equal in power and glory to that other. He cannot be God. For, certainly, there is no broader or more palpable distinction between God and the creature than this, that the latter exists by the power and will of the former. "For thou, O Lord, hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (by thy will) they are and were created." "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."¹—It is to this point then that I shall confine your attention in the remainder of this discussion; for there is hardly any other in the Arian opinion concerning Jesus Christ deserving much consideration, and if this can be shown to be unscriptural and untenable, all the rest of the theory falls to the ground.—I remark

I.

That the Arian idea, that the pre-existing nature of Christ was a production of the Divine power and will, has no real foundation in the Scriptures.

I make this negative observation, because Arians profess to found their ideas wholly on the word of God, and because they manage, by their peculiar way of treating that word, to give their system a degree of plausibility which may easily deceive the ignorant or the unwary.

How do they treat the inspired volume? I answer

¹ Rev. iv. 11; Rom. xi. 36.

that, on this subject at least, they seem very much inclined to ignore the whole of Old Testament revelation, and confine their attention entirely to the New Testament. Dr Clarke has collected many hundreds of passages which, in his opinion, relate to this question, and not one of them is from the Old Testament. Now why is this? The Old Testament and the New are integral parts of the same divine revelation. The one is the complement and interpreter of the other. The Old Testament never could have been fully understood without the New; the New Testament cannot be properly interpreted or valued without the Old. I will take upon me to say that there is not a single great doctrine of the Christian system that would appear in the same light, or seem to be precisely the same doctrine, if you were to exclude the light cast upon it by the Old Testament, and treat the New as if it were complete in itself. And this holds true, more especially, of the doctrines concerning the person of Christ—above all of the doctrine concerning his pre-existing nature; for, in the Old Testament, we see Christ revealed and acting in that pre-existing nature, while in the New we see him revealed and acting chiefly in his human nature. To pass over the Old Testament, therefore, and seek the knowledge of Christ's person only from the New, is very much as if one were to divide a portrait or a statue in two, and present you with one half as a likeness of the person intended. Nay it is as if, dividing it *horizontally*, he were to set before you only the lower half of the figure as a complete resemblance of that person.

In the Old Testament, for instance, it could easily be shown that Christ is, in his pre-existing nature, revealed and described as "the Lord God Almighty, the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the Shepherd and King and Holy

One of Israel." It was he who appeared to Moses at the bush, and proclaimed himself to be the "I AM"—the Eternal and Self-existent being. It was he who redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt—leading them through the sea, and through the wilderness, by the hands of Moses and Aaron—to whom they sang "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" It was he, "the Most High God," as an apostle expressly tells us, whom they tempted in the wilderness; and he who brought them in, and planted them in the mountain of his inheritance, "the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established." It was he also who dwelt among them there, in the cloud of glory, "shining forth, from above the mercy-seat and from between the cherubim." In a word, in the Old Testament we find Christ generally revealed and acting in his higher nature and previous condition, as God, and only now and then have we a shadowy or prophetic glimpse of his future condition as man: but in the New Testament we find him commonly spoken of in his created nature and lowly condition, as man, and only now and then does the glory of his pre-existing nature and condition burst forth. And what then is to be thought of those who, while they allow that he had two natures, virtually extinguish the revelation which has been given us of the one, and derive their ideas of him only from that relating to the other? Is this handling the word of God honourably and wisely? or "handling it deceitfully?"

But this is not all; nor is it the worst. For, in dealing with the statements even of the New Testament, Arians practically ignore the great fact that our blessed Lord had assumed human nature into personal union with his

higher nature, and insist that those passages which speak of his subordination to the Father—his inferiority to the Father—are to be considered as referring to that higher nature. Their object in this is very apparent. They wish to find from Scripture support for their idea that this higher nature of Christ was not properly divine,—that it was a created and dependent nature,—and that he was a divine person only in a conventional or figurative sense. Take one specimen of this Arian mode of interpretation. Our Lord said to his disciples when he was about to leave them, “If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go to the Father; *for my Father is greater than I.*”¹ Now there are three or four different ways in which these last words may be satisfactorily explained in perfect consistency with the statements of Christ at other times, that he and the Father were *equal*—that he and the Father were *one*. But the Arians insist that they shall be explained only in that way in which they would both contradict these other statements, and reduce our Lord to the level of a creature. The words, “My Father is greater than I” might be understood as referring to the economical relations of the Father and Son,—the fact that in the plan of redemption the Father sustains the majesty of the Godhead, and the Son acts as his messenger or servant—an arrangement perfectly consistent with the unity of their essence and their equality in glory. Or, the words might be understood as referring to the human nature of Christ which, though united to the divine, remained, in itself, a weak, finite, and created nature, infinitely inferior to the divine nature. Or, finally, the words may be considered as having a direct reference to the lowly condition of our blessed Lord on earth—to the fact that he had not only assumed human nature, but

¹ John xiv. 28.

assumed that nature in its lowliest form—its most abased and humbled condition. He was born of a mean woman, in the most outcast circumstances. He was through all his life on earth a poor, suffering, despised, and oppressed man—"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," "a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people"—classed with publicans and sinners, "numbered with the transgressors," condemned and crucified like a felon and a slave. He was in this respect not only inferior to the Father and to his *former self*,—not only "made for a little lower than the angels,—but lower than the lowest of men; nay, in some points, lower than the "lower creatures:" for "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head." O who can adequately depict the low condition of him who "being in the form of God, thought it not a prey to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" But "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."¹

Such are some of the ways in which these words of Christ, "My Father is greater than I," may be explained in perfect consistency with the doctrine of his divine nature. It is not necessary for me to inquire at present into the best way of explaining them; but it could easily be shown that the last harmonises best with the circumstances in which the words were uttered. For our Lord was evidently reproving his disciples for the coldness and weakness of their love to him—for the

¹ Phil. ii. 7-8; 2 Cor. viii. 9.

want of such a measure of love as would have enabled them to sympathize with him in his joyful prospect of going to the Father, with whom he would be in so much more exalted and glorious a condition than that in which he was on earth; with whom he would be glorified "with the glory which he had with Him, before the world was." But in whatever way the words are to be explained, surely reason, and common sense, and even common decency would lead any one who honours Christ to explain them in any of these ways rather than force a meaning into them which, besides having no apparent bearing on the context, makes the blessed Saviour—"the faithful and true witness"—flatly contradict himself. And the same remark applies to a hundred other passages of a like import. It applies to all those passages which speak of Christ as "sent by the Father," and serving him,—as receiving his office and authority from the Father,—as having, and keeping, the Father's commandments,—as doing not his own will, but the will of the Father—seeking not his own glory, but the glory of the Father; as depending on the Father, praying to the Father, worshipping the Father. In all such passages it is implied that the Father is, in various respects, greater than the Son; and in explaining all of them, therefore, we are to keep in mind that while Christ is God, he is also man,—while in one of his natures he is the Father's "fellow" and equal, in the other he is the Father's "servant" and dependent.

I have one other remark to make in regard to the way in which Arians endeavour to make Scripture speak in accordance with their own opinions. It relates to the use which they make of such names and titles of Christ as "the Son of God, the Only-begotten of the Father, his First-born"—a use in which, I may notice

by the way, they have to some extent been encouraged by the incautious or inconsistent language of some orthodox divines. Considering these names as belonging chiefly or exclusively to the pre-existent nature of our blessed Lord they have, or seem to have, concluded from them that he was in that nature inferior to the Father, or in some way dependent for his existence on the power and will of the Father.—Now, without denying that these names may be applicable to the eternal relations of the first and second persons of the Trinity, or that the expressions, the *eternal Son of God*, the *Son of God by eternal generation*, though not scriptural expressions, may have a scriptural meaning affixed to them,—what I would call you to observe is that, in Scripture itself these names are given to Christ, usually if not uniformly, in his incarnate condition on earth, or in his risen and exalted condition in heaven. They are given to him as “*God manifest in flesh*,” or *God-man glorified*. For what can be plainer on this point than the following Scriptures?—in the words of the angel to Mary: “Behold thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the *Son of the Highest*.” “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*.” or, in the language of the beloved disciple, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the *only-begotten of the Father*) full of grace and truth.”¹ Again, in the prophetic oracle of the second Psalm, it was said, “I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee*.” language which is sometimes used as a proof of the

¹ Luke i. 31-35; John i. 14.

eternal generation of the Son of God; but which, an inspired apostle expressly and repeatedly tells us, was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ,—when “he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”¹

In regard to the title “the First-born,” or “First-begotten,” which is also given to Christ, I would call you to notice that there are two senses in which it is used in Scripture, a literal and a figurative sense. Or, there were formerly two ideas affixed to the term, which, as many instances show, were separable from each other. According to the literal sense, it means of course the *eldest son* of a family; but according to the figurative, it means the *son who obtained the birth-right*—that son to whom it was said, “Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee,”—whether he was the eldest or the youngest son of the family. And I need not remind you how often in the Abrahamic family a younger son was *made first-born* in this latter sense. Glance over the history of that family, and you will perceive that (as if to foreshadow some great mystery) this may be said to have been the rule rather than the exception.—Now it is in this latter sense alone, that the title of First-born is ever given to Christ; it is as God-man exalted to the headship of the Church and of the whole creation—constituted “Lord of all.” This could easily be shown by the citation of all the passages in which the title is given to him, for they are not many; but let two suffice. In the 89th Psalm, it is said of him, under the prophetic name of David, “I will make him my first-born, higher than the Kings of the earth;” and in the first chapter of the epistle to the Colossians it is said of God’s “dear

Ps. li. 7; Acts xlii. 33; Rom. i. 4; Heb. i. 5.

Son"—the son of his love—when come to his kingdom, that he "*is* (observe—not *was*) the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature" (or of all creation); "and he *is* the head of his body the church; who is the beginning; the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence," *i.e.*, *might be chief*. And if you ask the reason why this headship over all things—this dignity of the first-born—has been conferred on *him*—the God-man, Christ Jesus—the same passage gives the answer: namely, that (besides being a reward for his mediatorial work) this place and dignity belonged to him by right; they were his by divine and imprescriptible title—not the title of being the first and eldest of all creatures, but that of being the origin—the maker and preserver of all creatures: "For (because) by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." How plainly does it appear from this that the title "*the First-born of all creation*," is not to be understood as giving the *date* of Christ's pre-existing nature, but as describing the *dignity* of his present condition.¹ It is quite a perversion of it, therefore, to regard it as implying his inferiority, *in that nature*, to the Father, or his dependence on the power and will of the Father.

I may add that the language of the apostle in the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews entirely supports this view of this passage, and affords a commentary on it: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

¹ Comp. Rom. viii. 29.—Where "the *primogeniture* attributed to him refers not to age, but to the degree of honour and the eminence of power which he enjoys."—*Calvin*.

whom he hath appointed heir of all things (making him the *first-born* — giving him the *birth-right* over angels and men), by whom also he made the worlds ; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son ? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world (*i. e.*, in his exalted condition) he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him"¹—But I have said enough, I trust, satisfactorily to show that the Arian opinion concerning Jesus Christ has no real foundation in the word of God, and to show that Arians do not treat that word fairly when they endeavour to impose their views upon it. I go on therefore to make a second remark ; namely

II.

That the Arian opinion concerning Jesus Christ is entirely opposed to the plain dictates of the word of God.

We have taken the highest type of Arianism, the idea that the pre-existing nature of Christ was produced, we know not how, before all ages, by the power and will of the Father ; and if this can be shown to be opposed to Scripture, then, of course, all lower types of the same heresy, as that he was created out of nothing, will be seen to be still more so. Now to prove this it is only necessary to remind you, very shortly, of a

¹ Heb. i. 1-6 ; Comp. Ps. ii. 7 ; 2 Sam. vii. 14 ; Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27 ; xcvi. 7.

few passages of scripture which ascribe eternal and necessary existence to Christ,—which represent him as one with the Father,—and which attribute to him the same or equal powers and perfections and prerogatives. I shall do little more than quote a few of these passages; for they are very numerous, and to dwell upon them is altogether unnecessary.

And, first, as to the eternal and necessary existence of Jesus Christ, in his pre-existing nature, I conceive that it is most unequivocally asserted in the first verse of the first chapter of John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God:" i.e. the Word was from eternity a different person from the Father; yet he was equally divine, equally God; for, whatever point of past duration you fix on as "the beginning," *then* the Word *was* (he was not then produced, but was in existence, equally with the Father) and was God—the eternal and necessarily existent Deity.¹

Again, the language of Christ in the eighth chapter of John is a proof of the same thing: "Before Abraham was, *I am*." It was mentioned in last lecture that some orthodox interpreters were willing to understand this language as meaning the same thing as if Christ had said, "Before Abraham was, *I was*." But the question arises, If our Lord meant this, why did he not say

¹ There is no room for any dispute, here, about the meaning of the phrase "In the beginning," for Arians interpret it as meaning "before all ages," i.e. from eternity. Clarke's note on the expression is, "Before all ages; before the creation of the world; before the world was, (John xvii. 5, and verses 3 and 10 of this chapter.) Thus was this phrase constantly understood in the primitive church. And nothing can be more forced and unnatural than the interpretation of the Socinian writers, who understand *in the beginning* to signify only *at the first preaching of the Gospel*."—*Scrip. Doct. of the Trin.*, p. 72.—Yet, strange to say, in the very next page, speaking of the same verse, Clarke, clandestinely, or at least without proof, changes the date of the Word's existence as God, from *eternity* to *time*, from "*before the creation*" to *after the creation of the world*!

this? It would have been as easy for him to use the one form of words as the other. Anti-trinitarians are fond of referring the plural names of God in the Old Testament to a supposed idiom of the Hebrew tongue and other tongues; but there was no idiom that required our Lord to use *I am* for *I was* here; and, as a mere assertion of his having been in existence before Abraham, the latter expression would have been both more correct and more explicit than the former. It would have been less liable to misapprehension, and in every point of view more eligible. And why then did he not use it? The only satisfactory answer appears to be that our Lord by the use of *I am* intended to convey a meaning which could not have been conveyed by the use of *I was*. He intended to assert not only his *pre-existence*, but his *self-existence*,—that he was the eternal and self-existent Jehovah—the Divine person who appeared to Moses at the bush, and said, “I AM THAT I AM: thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”¹ The same meaning is plainly involved in those titles repeatedly assumed by Christ in the book of Revelation: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”² Is not this the language of the “faithful and true witness?” and must he not therefore be truly divine?

¹ The expression “*I am*” may be regarded either as a distinct proposition, equivalent to “*I am he*,” as in Deut. xxxii. 39; Isa. xli. 4; xlii. 10, 13; xli. 4; xlviii. 12; or as a proper name, equivalent to *Jehovah*. In the latter case the statement is very explicit, as if Christ had said, “*Jehovah* was before Abraham” See Dr Brown’s “*Disc. and Sayings*,” etc. Exp. xl, Pt. 4.—It ought to be kept in mind that when we speak of the *self-existence*, or *independent existence* of a Divine person, we do not mean a *self-existence*, or *independent existence*, in respect of the other persons of the Godhead; we do not mean the *self-existence* of the Father, independently of the Son, or the *self-existence* of the Son independently of the Father. We refer to *self-existence*, or *independent or necessary existence*, as an attribute of the Godhead, and therefore predicable of each of the persons of the Godhead.

² Rev. i. 8, 11; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.

But, again, as to Christ's unity of essence with the Father: while reason plainly compels us to deduce it from his eternal and necessary existence, Scripture as plainly declares it. It does so, for instance, in those passages which proclaim the unity of the Godhead: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord"—one Jehovah, or self-existent being; but it does so more especially in that passage in the tenth chapter of John, in which Christ expressly said, "I and the Father are *one*"—not one person; for the word *one* is neuter and implies one *thing*, one *being*, one *substance* or *essence*.¹ To this may be added the repeated sayings of Christ, that he was *in the Father* and *the Father in Him*.² It is true that he said also of his people, that he was in them, and they in him; and that it is said by an apostle that "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."³ But it is plain that all language must be explained according to the nature and conditions of the subjects or beings spoken of. Could it be proved that the divine essence was communicable to creatures, or that Christ's people had an eternal and necessary existence, then this language, when used of him and them, would admit of the same interpretation as when used of the Father and the Son. But since neither of these things is possible, the language must be interpreted differently in the two cases: in the one case *literally*, in the other case *spirit-*

¹ Many trinitarian writers suppose that it is only unity of *power* or *operation* that is asserted in this verse; from which unity of *nature* may be inferred, because *power* is an attribute of nature. Others, however, believe that it is unity of essence or nature that is asserted, as the reason or foundation of the unity of power and operation spoken of in the context. This last seems best to agree with the place of the statement, and with the natural force of the words. It best explains also the conduct of the Jews, who regarded the statement as blasphemous; and best harmonizes with the concluding words of our Lord's argument—"Believe the works, that ye may know and believe that *the Father is in me*, and *I in him*."—See *Dr Brown's "Disc. and Sayings,"* etc., Exp. xv.—*Pye Smith's Test.*, vol. II., p. 97.—*Bloomfield's Crit. Dig.* *in loc.*

² John x. 38; xiv. 10, 11, etc.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

ually or metaphorically. For, in the one case it is capable of a literal interpretation, in the other not.

But, once more, in regard to Christ's equality with the Father in all divine perfections and prerogatives,—in addition to those already cited,—I might remind you of scores of passages in which this equality is proclaimed or implied. Permit me only to remind you of one or two:—When Jesus called God his “own Father”—his proper Father, as the expression means—the Jews said that he “made himself equal with God,” and Jesus did not correct or contradict them, or in any way disown their inference. He on the other hand confirmed it by asserting that “what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”¹—When the blind beggar of Jerusalem, whose eyes he had opened, “worshipped him,” Jesus did not refuse the worship, but accepted, and even highly approved of it. He contrasted the intelligent and rational conduct of that poor man with the stupidity and unbelief of the proud Pharisees: “For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not might see, and that they who see might be made blind.”² And the worship which this man rendered him, he it remembered, is described as the highest kind of worship—the worship due only to God.³—But why speak of blind beggars, or any others of his humble followers on earth, rendering such worship to Jesus? seeing all men and angels are commanded to do so, and described as doing so. For “when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” “Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹ John v. 17, 19. ² John ix. 38, 39. ³ See “Socinian Opinion,” p. 96, note

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." "And I beheld," says John, "and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."¹

But it may be objected, Is not all this honour and glory said to be *given* to Christ by the Father? And does not this imply that it does not belong to him save by the will of the Father; and that therefore he cannot be originally equal with the Father? The answer is plain and certain: That it is both *given* to him, and *belongs* to him by original right. It is given to him as man and mediator, because it belongs to him as God. For he is now "*made* as much better than the angels as he hath by inheritance (*i.e.*, by eternal possession) a more excellent name than they." Accordingly it was said to him, "Thy throne O God is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the

¹ Heb. i. 6; Phil. ii. 9-11; Rev. v. 11-14.

foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thy hands : they shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”¹

But it were needless to enlarge on this ; for the passages of Scripture which, either by direct assertion or indirect implication, contain evidence of the equality of Christ with the Father in all the perfections and prerogatives of the Deity, are more numerous than could be mentioned, or than is commonly supposed. They meet us in almost every page of the inspired volume. Let the serious Christian and the earnest inquirer after truth, in the daily reading of the word of God, set himself to mark them, and he will find them studding that word like stars in the milky way ; and so he will be immovably established in this great truth—this foundation of the Christian system—that Jesus Christ “who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” was, in his pre-existing nature and person, not the highest creature—not a creature in any sense of the term—but “**GOD OVER ALL BLESSED FOR EVER.**” “**THIS IS THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE.**”² We have another observation to make, namely,—

III.

That the Arian opinion concerning Jesus Christ unsettles the foundation of Christianity, and reduces the whole system, doctrinal and practical, to confusion.

The person of Jesus Christ is the foundation on which the Christian Church is built. The true and supreme divinity of Christ is the keystone of all its doctrines and duties and hopes. Remove this, and the whole struc-

¹ Heb. i. 4, 8-12.

² Rom. i. 4 ; 1x. 5 ; 1 John v. 20.

ture is dissolved and becomes a heap of ruins. Retain this doctrine, and, like the body of Christ, the Christian Church and the Christian system are the temples of the living God; the most high God—the only living and true God—dwells in them, and glorifies them. But banish this doctrine and they become no way essentially different from the idol temples of the nations. A mere creature or an imaginary deity is then enthroned and worshipped in them; and the worshipper “feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, or say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

I mentioned before that primitive Arianism is supposed to have arisen, partly, from the noxious influence of Jewish theology and Gentile philosophy on early Christianity, during the first struggles of the infant Church with these two great antagonists—these two serpents that sought to devour it in the cradle. And you can easily conceive how this influence might operate. On the one hand, the defenders of the truth would be tempted by Jewish unitarianism to yield up imperceptibly some essential points of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; and on the other, they might insensibly give way to the specious sophistries of Gentile polytheism on the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Christ. By both of these tendencies they would be led to the same centre of rest—the idea that the divinity ascribed to Christ was some kind of inferior or created divinity,—a secondary or figurative divinity. Here both Jew and Gentile could meet, and take on them the profession of Christianity, without forsaking the first principles of their own faith—their own fancied wisdom. Arianism would thus please both; for it was a concession to both, while Christianity alone suffered.

I have little doubt that it was in a similar way that

modern Arianism arose. It was an attempt to conform Christianity to what is called natural religion, or to make it square with the dictates of natural reason. The doctrine of the Trinity is so confounding to that reason, or so far beyond its reach, and the doctrine of inferior or deputy godships has always been so pleasing to it, that we need not be astonished that some of the greatest minds of modern times should have made this attempt, and that, deceived by their own subtleties, they should have been led away from "the faith once delivered unto the saints." Nor need we be surprised that many excellent and amiable men,—men most respectable in worldly station, and estimable in moral character,—should have followed "their pernicious ways." But not the less—only the more—is this heresy to be condemned as pernicious; for what is it but a "denying of the Lord who bought them—denying the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ?"¹

True, none are more ready to give high-sounding titles to Jesus Christ than Arians. They willingly allow to him all the divine names and honours which are given him in Scripture. But what boots it, when they allow them only in words? They deck him with the empty titles, but deny him the real glory which these titles express. They change their import, and employ them in a *non-natural* sense. In other words, they apply them to him *falsely*, and so dishonour both the Father and the Son. For, if the true and supreme divinity of Christ be disowned, what but a species of idolatry—a violation of the very first commandment of the divine law—is it to give him names and honours and worship to which he can have no true right? He is then but a *creature*; and, though the highest creature, the distance between him and God is infinite,—the distance

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2; Jude 4.

between him and the lowest creature is but a cubit or a span.

Then, too, if the doctrine of Christ's supreme divinity be rejected as false, what doctrine of Scripture can be received and reposed in as true? Certainly no doctrine seems more frequently or plainly or emphatically taught in Scripture than this; none can be regarded as more fundamental or important; and if then we cannot receive the obvious dictates of the word of God on this point, on what other point can we receive them? Can we do so on the subject of the *real humanity* of Christ? The one doctrine is as deep a mystery as the other. The one is as offensive to human wisdom, and as far above the reach of natural reason, as the other. And if then, in opposition to the plain letter of Scripture, the Arian opinion that Christ was not truly God be received, why should the Cerinthian opinion that he was not really man be rejected? The latter is not more obviously opposed to the letter and spirit of Scripture than the former. And if Christ was neither truly God, nor really man, *what was He?* and *where are we?* What was his atonement for sin, but a shadow? and what are our hopes of salvation, founded on that atonement, but a dream? The sacrifice of the Gospel is, in that case, no more *real* than those of the Law; and sin which *is* real, is yet unexpiated—untaken away: so that if Christ was neither God nor man, "our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins!"

Further, what, on this hypothesis, becomes of the glorious doctrine of divine love—the love of both the Father and the Son? According to the Scriptural view, the love of God is one in substance but different in form in the two persons of the Godhead; but according to the Arian view, the love of the Father is annihilated, and the love of the Son becomes that of a mere creature.

For it was evidently no true love in the Father—no love, at least, worthy of the nature and name of God, to give a mere creature, not essentially related to himself, for the redemption of men. We could never see in this that “God is love;” and the mysterious proclamation, “Awake O sword against my shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, Smite the Shepherd,”—would indeed still be mysterious, but no longer for its love. And if salvation could come to man at all through such an atonement, certainly he would be more indebted for that salvation to the love of a fellow-creature—his own “fellow,” not God’s—than to the love of God!

Nay more, the justice of God, displayed in the sacrifice of Christ, would, on the Arian hypothesis, become as questionable as his love. For how could it be seen to be consistent with justice to lay the sins of the guilty on the head of the innocent—that innocent person being a mere creature, and having no power either “to lay down his own life, or to take it again?” The imputation of sin would then be an act of mere authority and oppression, on the part of the Creator; and the bearing of it an act of involuntary submission to wrong, on the part of the creature. There could be no “counsel of peace between them both;” for the parties would not be equal.

And, finally, the holiness and truth of God, his consistency and wisdom, would all become as doubtful as his justice and love. For has he not said that he “will not give his glory to another?” while, according to the Arian scheme, this is the very thing he has done: he has given his glory to Jesus Christ, another than himself—his praise to a mere creature.—Has he not also denounced the “worshipping and serving of the creature, rather than of the Creator,” as the first and

greatest of all sins? yet, according to Arianism, this is the very thing which he has commanded—calling on all men “to honour the Son even as they honour the Father,” and to honour the Son *first*, by believing on him and worshipping him, before they come by him to the Father.—And did he not cast down Lucifer, son of the morning, to bottomless perdition, for usurping the honours and prerogatives of Deity? while, according to Arianism, he himself had purposed to do virtually the same thing—to award these honours and prerogatives to another creature—to raise another Lucifer to the throne of the Eternal. True, God may give to a creature what a creature may not dare to assume to himself. But if this be all the difference between the histories of Satan and Christ; if there be so thin a partition between the deepest doom, and the highest glory—between the origin of all evil and the origin of all good; if the great “mystery of iniquity” be thus nearly allied to the “great mystery of godliness,”—who will say that the holiness and truth, the consistency and wisdom of God, are not in danger of being obscured and confounded? or rather that, to the minds of creatures, they are not so already?

But to conclude: let me call on all and especially on the young to beware of this Arian opinion concerning Jesus Christ. It is not perhaps so daring or so startling, especially when dressed in the plausibilities of its defenders, as the Socinian opinion; but it is more insidious, and also naturally leads to Socinianism or deism. Why has Arianism, however often it has raised its standard, and however great the men who have acted as its standard-bearers, never become a dominant, or even a permanent heresy in the Christian Church? I answer, Not because its adherents have ever

returned in great numbers to catholic Christianity, but because they have gone on, like Priestley, and in due time become Socinians, and many of them, I fear, deists or atheists. To stop at Arianism, I apprehend, is impossible. It is as if one should endeavour to arrest himself after taking the first step over a precipice. It is as if a pilot should attempt to station his vessel immediately off the point of some rocky, stormy promontory, where conflicting winds meet, and opposing currents continually run. Here, on the one hand, is the safe haven of Scriptural truth, where you may cast anchor on the rock of ages; there, on the other, is the comparatively smooth and shallow bay of Socinianism, where you may drop it in the shifting and deceitful sands of human reason and philosophy; but at the point between, there is no anchorage and no shelter—nothing but storms above, and deep, unfathomable gulfs below.

The miserable death of Arius, the father of this heresy, has sometimes been considered as a sentence of divine condemnation pronounced upon his heresy, and a warning from heaven against it. It is dangerous for us, however, to interpret the judgments, or wield the thunderbolts of God. All that we can safely say is that it is predicted in the New Testament, "That there would be false teachers in the Church who would privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction;" and that the case of Arius agrees thereto. Certainly no heresy of early times could be more justly described as "damnable" than his, and no end more worthy of the name of "swift destruction." According to the testimony of the most intelligent and trustworthy historians he had made a deceitful profession of his faith to the emperor,

and confirmed it with an oath. The emperor, satisfied with this profession, ordered him to be publicly re-admitted to the fellowship of the Church, from which he had been excommunicated. The pious bishop of Constantinople, unwilling to admit him, was filled with perplexity, and cried to God for deliverance from his embarrassment. The day appointed for the solemn ceremony was come. Arius, as some say, was already proceeding in triumph from the imperial palace to the metropolitan church, when he was suddenly smitten with a painful internal distemper of which he died in agony the same day. We cannot certainly say that this was a judgment from God on account of his wickedness; but let us at the same time beware of thinking and feeling in reference to such occurrences as if "there was no God." While we avoid passing sentence on others, however wicked, let us at the same time take heed to ourselves lest, denying the truth, or holding it in unrighteousness, we bring upon ourselves that "wrath of God" which certainly is "revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness, and all unrighteousness of men." Let us "beware lest we also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from our own steadfastness:" but let us "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

The Catholic Opinion.

Part First.

O Thou Essential Word,
Who from eternity
Dwelt with the Father, and wast God,
Who wast ordained to be
The Saviour of our race;
Welcome indeed thou art,
Blessed Redeemer, Fount of grace,
To this my longing heart!

Why didst thou leave thy throne,
O Jesus, what could bring
Thee to a world where e'en Thine own
Knew not their rightful King?
Thy love beyond all thought,
Stronger than death or hell,
And *our* deep woe, this wonder wrought
That Thou on earth didst dwell.

LYRA GERMANICA.

Text.

1 John v. 20.—“We know that the Son of God is come, and that he hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: Subject and plan of the discourse. OBSERVATION I. Jesus Christ a Divine person, the second person of the Trinity—The doctrine of the Trinity an important and practical part of the Christian system—Objections to it—Clarke's argument founded on his definition of the word *person*—Channing's argument—The infidel objection. OBSERVATION II. Jesus Christ, by an eternal, divine arrangement, constituted Mediator—Scriptural designations and proofs of this arrangement—Comprehends all the dispensations of time. OBSERVATION III. Jesus Christ the Creator of the world, and during the Old Testament period the conductor of divine providence and grace—Scriptural proofs of the former truth—The preface to John's Gospel explicitly asserts the latter—Other arguments—Unitarian and Arian objections to it—Answers—Instances of the manifestation of Christ as God under the Old Testament dispensations—To our first parents in the garden—To Moses at the bush, and Israel at Sinai—This truth confirmed by New Testament inspiration. CONCLUSION: Practical importance of the knowledge of Christ's glory.

V.

THE CATHOLIC OPINION.

PART FIRST.

THE subject of this discourse is the CATHOLIC OPINION CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST—what the generality of Christians have always held to be *the truth concerning him*. This is a much more extensive subject than that of any of the preceding discussions ; for it naturally comprehends not only the truth about his *person*, but that also about his *office*, as Mediator, and his *work*, as the Saviour of the world. Not only so, each of these points might be viewed with a reference to the three conditions in which he has been revealed to us in Scripture :—his pre-existing condition, before he came in the flesh ; his incarnate condition, when he tabernacled on earth ; and his present condition, as raised from the dead and glorified by the Father “ with that glory which he had with him before the world was.” Thus the title of the present discourse, instead of pointing to a single question, as that of each of the foregoing was specially designed to do, takes in a complete system of Christology, and might be made to comprehend all the doctrines of revealed religion.

It would, of course, be useless to attempt the survey of so wide a field of contemplation in any one discourse,

or even in any number of discourses of the general character of this series. I propose to devote two lectures to it ; and all I shall attempt is, keeping in view the threefold division of the history or manifestations of Christ which I have mentioned, to make a few observations on some of the most prominent truths in regard to his person, office, and work, which may be said to constitute the chief articles of the Christian faith on these subjects.—And to begin with his pre-existing condition, I remark—

I.

That it is, and has always been, an essential part of the Catholic doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, that he is a Divine person, the second person of the blessed Trinity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a great and fundamental part of the Christian system, for it may be truly said to be the basis on which all the faith and worship of the Christian Church rest ; and that system may be described as a majestic, spiritual temple, erected to the name and filled with the glory of a THREE-ONE GOD. It is also as important practically as it is theoretically. We cannot be Christians at all without holding it, and we cannot be intelligent or decided Christians without having it constantly before our minds, mingling with all the parts of our Christian faith and all the exercises of our Christian worship. For, whether we will or no, this doctrine meets us at every turn in the path of the Christian profession. Our first introduction to the Christian Church involves an exhibition of the doctrine of the Trinity ; for we are baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Every spiritual offering of prayer or praise is an acknowledgment of this doctrine ; for, formally considered, it is presented to the Father,

in the name of the Son, by the help of the Holy Ghost. And the concluding service on every occasion of public worship is a memorial of it; for the "apostolic blessing" which has, I presume, been employed for this purpose from the beginning of the Christian age, by all sections of the Christian Church, is pronounced in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Nay, so was it also, we have reason to believe, in the Old Testament Church; for the threefold blessing in the name of the Lord, pronounced by the priests on the tribes of Israel, may warrantably be regarded as having the same import—involving the same memorial and acknowledgment. "The LORD bless thee and keep thee: The LORD make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."¹

But it may be objected, That this doctrine of the Trinity is a very mysterious doctrine, and how then can it be either an important or practical one? I answer, that in one view it is indeed the profoundest of all mysteries, but in another it is one of the plainest of all matters of fact. For what is the doctrine of the Trinity, but simply this: That the eternal Deity is, in one respect, ONE; but, in another respect, he is more than one—he is THREE? And hence we speak of him

¹ Num. vi. 24-26.—"After this form the High Priest was commanded to bless the children of Israel. The name of the Lord, in Hebrew *Jehovah*, is here repeated *three* times, and parallel to this is the form of Christian baptism; wherein the three personal terms of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, are not represented as so many different names, but as one name: the one divine nature of God being no more divided by these three, than by the single name *Jehovah* thrice repeated. If the three articles of this benediction be attentively considered, their contents will be found to agree respectively to the three persons taken in the usual order of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*. The *Father* is the author of blessing and preservation. *Grace* and *illumination* are from the *Son*, by whom we have the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*. *Peace* is the gift of the *Spirit*, whose name is the *Comforter*, and whose first and best fruit is the work of *Peace*."—*Jones on the Trinity*.—See also *Hales' New Analysis of Chronology*, etc., vol. iii., p. 288.

as a *Trinity*, i.e., a *Tri-unity*, a *Three-one God*. This is the sum of the doctrine ; and the reasons of it are equally simple and intelligible : namely, that while all reason and revelation proclaim that God is One—one Eternal and Self-existent being—one Jehovah, there are at the same time multitudes of passages of Scripture which cannot be understood (and indeed the whole framework of revealed religion would be disjointed and destroyed) without the idea of a threefold distinction in this one, eternal being—which distinction, without dissolving the *unity*, involves and develops the *trinity*, in the Godhead.

In regard to the precise respect in which God is *one*, and the precise respect in which he is *three*, Scripture gives us no adequate information. It neither professes nor attempts to do so ; and the less we ourselves speculate on these points, or on the manner in which this unity and trinity may be conceived to consist together, so much the better. To be able to explain this consistency is not necessary ; and seeing both the *unity* and the *trinity* are undefined and undefinable, it may be safely said to be impossible for man to explain it. We are in the habit, indeed, for convenience' sake, and for the purposes of edification, of saying that God is one, as to his *essence*, or *substance*, or *nature*,—and that he is three, as to his *personality* ; in other words, that “ there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” But we ought ever to keep in mind that as, when we apply the terms *Father* and *Son* to God, we do not mean to convey precisely the same ideas as when we apply them to men, so neither do we profess to use the word *person* in precisely the same sense in the two cases. Human language is still more inadequate to express accurately

and fully the things of God than the human intellect to comprehend them; and frequently we must use a term to express a certain idea, not because it comes up to that idea, but because it does so more nearly, or less imperfectly, than any other we can find. Hence the danger of misapprehension; and hence also the room for cavil and controversy.

To illustrate this: Clarke's whole argument against the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity may be said to be founded on his definition of the word *person*; and that definition too, as it appears to me, is something very like a begging of the whole question. He takes *person* to mean "*an intelligent agent*;" and concludes that as God must be "one simple, uncompounded, undivided, intelligent agent," therefore there can be only one person in the Godhead. Now, whether, in the language of philosophers, this be a good definition of the word *person* or not, I shall not seek to determine; but sure I am that in the language of the common people, in which the doctrines of religion must commonly be expressed, it is not. On the one hand, an infant, "that cannot discern between its right hand and its left," is not yet an intelligent agent; but in good English—the good old English of our bibles—it is a person. On the other hand, the lower animals are so far intelligent agents, yet not persons. When we are asleep, we cease for the time to be intelligent agents; but surely we do not cease to be persons. And if you look into a common English dictionary (say Johnson's) you will find that among the ten or twelve different meanings of the word *person* which are given, that of *intelligent agent* does not occur. Besides, even if this were a good definition of the term, what is to hinder us from conceiving and speaking of a threefold distinction in one intelligent agent, as well as in one intelligent essence,—and so ap-

plying the word *person* in a more general acceptation to the One God, and in a more particular acceptation to the three subsistences in the Godhead? For my part, I see nothing to prevent this: and the truth is, we actually do it; for when we speak of God, or of the Godhead, in opposition to pantheists, we speak of him as a personal God, or as a person; but at the same time, in perfect consistency with this mode of speaking, we believe and say, in opposition to the Arians and Unitarians, that there are three persons in the Godhead. Thus Clarke's fundamental objection to the doctrine of the Trinity either falls to the ground, or becomes a mere quibble about the meaning of a word.

But forth steps Channing, and he takes up the same quibble in a somewhat different shape. A *person*, according to him, means "*an individual mind*," having its own perception, will, and consciousness; and to say, therefore, that there are three persons in the Godhead, is to say that there are three different minds, having each a separate perception, will, and consciousness; which is in other words to say that there are *three Gods*.—I do not profess to give his very words, but only what I apprehend to be the pith of his argument.—And what shall we say to this? Perhaps, as applied to man, *person* may, and sometimes does, mean an individual *mind*; but not more frequently than it means an individual *body*; and much more frequently than either is it used (without distinguishing the mind and body) for an individual *human being*. Channing, therefore, might as well have objected, that to say that there are three persons in the Godhead is to say that there are three *bodies*, or three *human beings* in the Godhead. He, or the pantheist, might as well object, that to make God a person is to make him a *human being*. Most certainly, the three persons of the Godhead do not

mean three different minds, but one Omniscient Mind, with a threefold distinction in it,—in virtue of which distinction, each of the persons holds his own place in the one undivided counsel, and performs his own part in the one magnificent operation of the Omnipresent and Eternal Deity.

But once more : the deist or infidel will, no doubt, wish to be heard on this question. And what will he object to the doctrine of the Trinity ? Most probably, that it is an unintelligible mystery and therefore an incredible fable. Nay, he may say, 'It is a self-contradiction : for how can *one* be *three*, or *three one*?' To which we answer, A RELIGION WITHOUT A MYSTERY IS A RELIGION WITHOUT A GOD. The greatest of all mysteries is the *being of God*, the unbeginning, self-existing, uncaused *Cause of all things* ; and surely when we have believed in this mystery, we cannot rationally refuse to believe in any other mystery which this God may please to reveal to us. And as to one being three, or three one, it seems necessary only to ask any one who stumbles at this, to reflect upon himself. Unless he deny that he has a *soul*—an immaterial, intelligent spirit, within him,—unless he think himself merely a piece of organised matter,—he must believe that there are two distinct and totally different kinds of substance in his one person, (for anything he knows to the contrary there may be more than two, if there be more in all the universe of God) ; so that in himself *two* are *one*, or *one* is *two* ; and if so, surely it is immeasurable presumption in him to determine, without a shadow of evidence, that there cannot be an exemplification of the same thing, though in a different and still more mysterious way, in the eternal and incomprehensible Deity. In one word, as we have already said, both the *unity* of the Godhead, and the *trinity* of persons in it, are

to us equally undefinable ideas, and therefore all the wisdom of man can never prove them incompatible with each other.¹

I have dwelt thus long on the doctrine of the Trinity, because of its fundamental position and unspeakable importance in the Christian system. I only add that when we say that Jesus Christ is, in his divine nature, the second person of the Trinity, we mean that in all the plans and operations of the Deity, so far at least as we know them, he holds the second place. In all these plans and operations there is an order in which the persons are spoken of, and in which each performs his own peculiar or personal part; that order is never altered or reversed; and in it Christ is second. He is never first—he is never third. All things are *of* or *from* the Father, *in* or *by* the Son, *by* or *through* the Holy Ghost.²

II.

It is another part of the Catholic doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, in his pre-existing condition, that by an eternal purpose or arrangement he was constituted the Mediator between God and man.

I shall not dwell on this element of the Catholic opinion concerning Jesus Christ. All who believe in him as the Redeemer of man, and in the foreknowledge and decrees of God, must at once admit this eternal purpose and regard it as the foundation of all the manifestations and actings of Christ in his character of Mediator in time, and especially of that manifestation of

¹ The unity and trinity in the Godhead may be compared to two unknown quantities in algebra. So long as they are *unknown* no wisdom or science can pronounce them *unequal*. And if one who *knows* them should say that they form an equation, he would be a presumptuous and self-conceited sciolist—a *fool*, who would contradict or refuse to believe it.

² 1 Cor. viii. 6; xii. 8; John i. 3, 10; Col. i. 16, 17, 20; Heb. i. 2; 2 Cor. v. 18; Eph. ii. 22.

him in the flesh of which it is said, "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."¹

This eternal purpose or arrangement, in reference to the mediation of Christ, proceeded evidently on the divine foreknowledge of the sin of man; and its grand end and design were to glorify God in the salvation of a great but definite number of the human race. It is spoken of in Scripture under various designations. Sometimes it is referred to as an authoritative *purpose* or *appointment* of the Father, "which he purposed in himself;" for in this arrangement, and in all the divine dispensations coming under it, the Father occupies what are called his "economical relations,"—sustaining the majesty of the Godhead and commissioning and directing the other persons of the Trinity; and hence the acknowledged subordination of the Son and Spirit, in all these dispensations, to the Father. At other times this divine arrangement is spoken of as a *covenant* or a "*counsel of peace*" between the Father and the Son; because, evidently, from their original equality and their unity in mind and will and power, the Son must have been as spontaneous—as voluntary, in its formation, as the Father himself. "I have made a covenant with my chosen. The counsel of peace shall be between them both."²

But whatever be the particular designation under which this great divine arrangement is described, no reasonable doubt can be entertained of the scripturalness of the idea, or of the fact that all the dispensations of God in time—the whole history of human redemption and of the providence and grace of God since the world

¹ 1 Pet. i. 20, 21.

² Ps. lxxxix. 3; Zech. vi. 13.

began—are the development of this eternal purpose. To it and to the constitution of Christ as Mediator, included in it, the language of Solomon in the name of Wisdom, is generally understood to refer: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.”¹ The Psalms and Prophets frequently refer to it, and give its tenor: “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said to me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” “When his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”² Repeated allusions to it are also contained in our Lord’s intercessory prayer—a prayer presented by him in his character of Mediator: “Father the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him (given him in the eternal purpose) power over all flesh that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him (in the same purpose). I have glorified thee on the earth;

¹ Prov. viii. 22–31.

² Ps. ii. 7, 8; Isa. lili. 10–12.

I have finished the work which (in the same everlasting arrangement) thou gavest me to do. Father I will that they also whom (in this arrangement) thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”¹ And there are many plain references to it also in the Apostolical epistles; such as these:—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him: having in love predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” “In hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”²

But not to dwell longer on these things, and not to enter at present into any detail as to this office of Christ as Mediator, permit me to remark that, as has been already hinted, all the manifestations of Christ and all his doings and sufferings both as the representative of God and the redeemer of man, come under this office, and are the developments of this eternal arrangement. Thus the whole providence and grace of God from the beginning to the end of time constitute one connected and harmonious system—one sublime, though mysterious revelation of the character and counsels of the eternal God; and Jesus Christ occupies the same place in all, being the medium of intercourse and the link of union between God and man—the re-

¹ John xvii. 1, 2, 4, 24: see Dr Brown's Exp. of our Lord's Intercessory Prayer: *passim*.

² Eph. i. 3-6; Tit. i. 2.

presentative of God to man, the representative of man to God.

The mediatorial office and work of Christ are no doubt sometimes spoken of in Scripture in a more limited aspect than this: as when he is called "the mediator of the New Covenant," in contradistinction to Moses and Aaron and others, who occupied the place of mediators under the Old Covenant or dispensation. They are also sometimes viewed with a special reference to his incarnate condition and atoning death, which are the key-stone of all his mediatorial work. But this does not prevent the more comprehensive view which we have mentioned, but rather furnishes new and varied illustrations of it. Moses and Aaron, and all the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament ages, were but deputies of Christ as Mediator, and hence the correspondence of their offices to his. Besides, the dispensations of these ages, being preparatory for that of the New Testament, rested on the same foundation—the eternal counsel of God—and had the same great end in view. They were therefore an essential part of the mediatorial work of Christ, and he in his divine nature superintended and conducted them all. But as they were only preparatory,—as Christ had not yet taken upon him human nature, in which alone he could present that efficacious sacrifice for sin which the counsel of peace required,—for this and many other reasons, these dispensations were so framed as to be at the same time *symbolical* of the last and perfect dispensation in which Christ himself in human nature—"God manifest in flesh"—should be revealed as performing all the work, and bearing all the glory, of his mediatorial office. They were at once essential parts of Christ's mediatorial work, and temporary, typical, imperfect, and earthly illustrations—"shadows"—of the whole of it. "Behold the

man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD; even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and he shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”¹

III.

Jesus Christ was, in his pre-existing condition, the Creator of the world; and also, under the former dispensations of religion, the Revealed God—the conductor of all the providence and grace of God.

On the first part of the above proposition it is unnecessary to insist; for the truth upon the subject is so frequently and plainly stated in Scripture, that to doubt it or reject it is equivalent to a rejection of the authority of God. “God created all things by Jesus Christ.” “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” “By him were all things created which are in heaven, and which are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”²—It is worthy of being noticed by the way, and as a corroboration of what has just been said of the work of Christ as Mediator, that the last of these scriptures and some others seem to represent all creation as brought into existence and preserved in existence by Christ, not only in his divine nature, but also in his official character as Mediator. All things are said to be created *for* him as well as *by* him as Mediator; for it is in this character that he is there spoken of—“God’s dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the for-

¹ Zech. vi. 12, 13.

² Eph. iii. 9; John i. 3; Col. i. 16, 17.

givenness of sins—who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.” And what a lofty and consistent view of the mediatorial office of Christ, and the glory of Christ himself does this afford! The visible creation—heaven and earth—is the theatre, or rather the temple in which he performs his mediatorial functions. The earth is the outer court, heaven the inner court—“the holy of holies”—of that temple, in which he acts as a priest. “Heaven is his throne and the earth his footstool,” as a King. Angels and principalities and powers are his attendants and ministers. Men—his brethren—are the subjects of these mediatorial functions; and the end and object of all is the glory of God in the salvation of the Church of which he is made the head. For “he is the head of his body the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and (having made peace by the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”¹ And if all creation was thus brought into existence by and for Christ as Mediator, how certainly must all the providence and grace of God since have been conducted by and for him, in the same character, and in order to the development of that eternal counsel in which he was appointed to this office.

But this brings us back to the point to which we wished more particularly to direct your attention, namely, That from the beginning of the world, and under all the various dispensations of revealed religion, Christ—the second person of the Trinity, not the first—was the revealed God, and the revealed conductor of

¹ Col. 1. 18-20.

all the providence and grace of God. For although this idea has been entertained by the generality of Christians from the days of the apostles downwards, it is not, I fear, so impressively realised and remembered, in our day, as it ought to be; and there is not, therefore, in many Christians any suitable apprehension of the glory with which the Scriptures invest our blessed Redeemer; and consequently they can have no adequate idea of his condescension—his unspeakable self-abasement—when, “being in the form of God he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”¹

I alluded to this idea in last discourse, as one which could easily be supported from Scripture, but I would now mention more particularly how it may be so. And I begin by remarking that I cannot help thinking an eminent and orthodox theologian to be mistaken when he speaks as if there were no explicit declaration of Scripture on the subject;² for I am persuaded that we have a very explicit declaration, in the very place where it was most naturally to be expected, namely, the first paragraph of John’s gospel, containing as it does a short summary of the pre-existing actions and glory of Christ. Let us glance at the passage for a moment. In the first chapter of John, verses 6–9, it is said, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Now, this last statement

¹ Phil. II. 6–8.

² Hill’s Lect. on Divinity, Vol. II., p. 102.

ought unquestionably to be read and understood thus : " That Light, the true Light, which lighteth every man, was coming—was about to come—into the world : " *i.e.*, in the days of John the Baptist, Christ, or the Word, the true Light, was about to be manifested *in the flesh*. For this " coming into the world " is plainly his manifestation in flesh referred to in the 14th verse : " The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." But observe what the evangelist says before he comes to announce and describe this manifestation of Christ in the flesh. He says, verses 11-13, " He was (or had been) in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came (or had come) to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name."¹—Now the plain meaning of this, I apprehend, is that the Divine person spoken of in the preceding context, " the Word," " the Light," was *not* now, in the days of John the Baptist, coming into the world *for the first time*. He was coming in a new form—a new manner,—he was coming in the flesh ; but he had been in the world before, even from the beginning ; for the world was made and had been continually upheld by him : though " the world knew him not," *i.e.*, the great mass of mankind had no knowledge of him. Nay, this was not the only sense in which he had been in the world before ; for he had come also to "*his own*," *i.e.*, his own habita-

¹ Nothing is more common with John than to use the Greek aorist in the sense of the pluperfect : as for instance in this chap., ver. 19, 33 ; and chap. iv. 1 ; xviii. 24, etc. That the expression *ἦν ἰσχυόμενος εἰς τ. κ.* ought to be rendered " was coming, (or about to come) into the world," may be seen from a precisely analogous expression in Acts xxi. 3, rendered " there the ship was (about) to unlade her burden."

tion—his own “dwellings” or temple;¹ but “*his own*” *people*,—the Jewish nation (as a whole) had not received or recognised him. But *some* of them had received him, and to *these* he had given the privilege of being the sons of God—the true, spiritual *adoption*—“even to them believing on his name; who (having also the true, spiritual *regeneration*) were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” This language (though equally applicable to New Testament believers) points, evidently, to Old Testament believers, “the true Israel;” and the whole paragraph relates, as evidently, to Old Testament manifestations of Christ, both in the whole world as the God of providence, the “King of nations,” and in the Jewish church as the God of grace and salvation—the revealed “God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob,” the “Shepherd, and Holy One of Israel, whose dwelling-place was in Zion—who dwelt between the cherubim.” And then, accordingly, follows the account of his manifestation in the flesh, as subsequent to these,—his tabernacling among men in human nature: “And the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us full of grace and truth; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

This, then, is an explicit declaration of the Catholic doctrine that it was the second person of the Trinity who was revealed as “Jehovah-God” under the former dispensations of religion; and that from the beginning of the world all the superintendence of divine providence and grace—all divine government—was in *his* hand. And this doctrine could easily be supported by

¹ τὰ ἴδια, the neuter plural, in the only other instances in which it occurs in John, signifies a man's *own dwelling* or *home*: chap. xvi. 32; xix. 27. So also in Acts xxi. 6. And this is the most suitable meaning here, the word δώματα, or οὐκονόματα being understood, referring to the Jewish temple or tabernacle. Pa. xliii. 4; lxxxiv. 1, etc., *Sept.*

other scriptures, as well as by many powerful arguments. It is, we cannot doubt, the very reason of the names, "the Word of God, the Light of men," given him in this passage; for the one of these designations is that by which the revealed God was commonly known and spoken of among the Jews;¹ and the other is plainly descriptive of him both as the source of revelation and the author of salvation, as well as descriptive of the form in which he was manifested in the tabernacle and temple—the *Shekinah*. "The Lord is my *Light* and my salvation. With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light."²

Notice also that it is said in the 18th verse of the first chapter of John, that "no man hath seen God (the Father) at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," or made him known. Mark the precision and universality of this assertion, implying that the Father—the first person of the Godhead—was never seen—never manifested visibly, in any form, to men: "*No man hath seen him at any time.*" Remember also what Christ himself said of the Father: "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father;" and what an apostle has written of him: "Who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see."³—What now is the obvious conclusion from these and similar statements? Plainly, that the Father, the first person of the Trinity, was never revealed in his own person—never *seen*; and that the Divine person so often spoken of in the Old Testament as *seen*, must have been the second—he who is designated by John the "Word of God," and the "Light of men," and described by

¹ See Appendix, Note VI.

² Ps. xxvii. 1; xxxvi. 9.

³ John vi. 46; 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 John iv. 12.

Paul as the "image of the invisible God," the "brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

Jesus Christ, then,—that Divine person who was made flesh and tabernacled for a generation on the earth, "full of grace and truth," and in whom his disciples saw "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,"—was, under the Old Testament dispensations, the revealed God, and the revealer of God; and to him therefore belong all the power and authority, the honour and glory, the names and prerogatives ascribed to that Divine person, or exercised by him. He was and is "JEHOVAH-GOD, the I AM, the LORD OF HOSTS, the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL." To him the worship of the Old Testament Church was more immediately paid; and by him the interests of that Church were superintended, and all her glorious deliverances accomplished. He was at the same time, as Mediator, the "messenger" and "servant" of the eternal and invisible Father,—his representative,—the "angel of his presence,"—the "angel of the covenant,"—the "angel in whom was his name."

Of course, this part of the Catholic opinion concerning Jesus Christ has been, like all the others, objected to both by Arians and Unitarians; but in this case it so happens that they are antagonists (as they are indeed in many other questions) and answer each the objections of the other: and thus, in turn, they help to support the Catholic doctrine. Let me only for a moment glance at the chief objections and arguments of each, and the sufficient answer that shuts the mouth of both. And to begin with the Unitarian: he, of course, denying His pre-existence, is compelled to deny that Jesus Christ had anything to do with these Old Testament manifestations of a Divine person. He holds them all to have been manifestations of the One God, *i.e.*

the one person of the Godhead, in whom he believes ; and he endeavours to remove the difficulty arising from the fact that this God is invisible and was never seen, by alleging that these manifestations were all symbolical—that they were angelical or human forms appearing for the time as the symbols and “organs” of the Deity.—Now to this it might be answered that these angelical or human forms are spoken of, and act, as “intelligent agents,” and therefore, on the objector’s own principles, are to be regarded as real *persons* ; for Unitarians as well as Arians so define the term *person*. Either, then, these angelical and human forms were divine persons or not. If they were *not* divine, then mere creatures—created persons or forms—may be worshipped ; for these were. But if, on the other hand, they *were* divine, then, in opposition to Scripture, either the One God, the invisible God, has often been seen ; or after all there must be many persons in the Godhead—not *three* merely, but *many* : as many, at least, of “occasional persons” (as Dr Priestley calls them) as there are manifestations of the Deity recorded in Scripture—as many, it may be, as there are angels in heaven to be employed as the symbols and organs of the Deity ; i.e. “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands !” So that this Unitarian dream unavoidably lands us either in idolatry or polytheism.¹

But the Arian’s answer to the Unitarian’s fancy, about angelical symbols and organs of the Deity, is the best : namely, that it is altogether inconsistent with the plain import of the Scripture narratives, in which, from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament, *one great angel* is plainly spoken of as bearing the name of God, exercising the power of God, and receiving the honour and worship of God. Now the Arian, believing,

¹ See Jamieson’s Vind. in reply to Priestley. B. I. ch. iii.

as he does, in the pre-existence of Christ, and in his immeasurable pre-eminence above all other creatures, finds no difficulty in acknowledging this angel to be Christ: and so far we go along with him. But he goes on to contend, for the sake of his own theory about Christ, that the angel in question appeared and acted only as the representative of God—his deputy or ambassador,—and that therefore all the names and honour and glory which he received are no proof of his supreme or true divinity. ‘They were given to him only as representing, and acting for the “Great King” to whom alone they belonged.’—To this it might be answered that though a mere representative speaks and acts in the name of another—an ambassador in that of his sovereign—he never assumes that name to himself, or says in so many words ‘I am the Sovereign.’ What would be thought, for instance, of a French ambassador, at a foreign court, saying in express words ‘I am Napoleon III. ;’ or of a Russian ambassador saying ‘I am Alexander II. ;’ or of a British ambassador saying ‘I am Victoria?’ Would he not be regarded and treated as a maniac? Yet this is precisely what the so-called “representative angel”—the ambassador of “the King eternal, immortal, and invisible”—does in these Old Testament manifestations of which we speak. He says “I am Jehovah.” Nay, he says even more than this: for he says “I am God, and there is none else; I even I am he, and there is none besides me. Thou shalt have no other god before me.” And either he, or the Being who sent him (it matters not at present which) says also, “I am the LORD: that is MY NAME: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” “For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.”¹—The Socinian answer to this Arian

¹ Exod. xx. 3-5; Deut. xxxii. 39; Isa. xlii. 8; xliii. 11; xlii. 8; xlv. 5, etc.

idea of mere representation is also, so far as it goes, a good one: namely, 'That such language as the above leaves no room for thinking of mere representation as meant; and that if the being who so speaks is not God, we can never possibly have any communication from God, or know that we have it; for no language could be more appropriate or peculiar as a description of God *himself*—none more exclusive of angels or any class of creatures as participants of his glory.'—But the ordinary Catholic reply to this Arian idea of mere representation is the most complete and satisfactory, meeting all the exigences of the case and leaving no insuperable difficulty behind. It is that the Divine person who appeared and acted in all these manifestations of the Deity, being Christ—the second person of the Trinity, the "fellow and equal" of the Father, acting in his character as Mediator,—was at once "Jehovah," the "angel of Jehovah," and the "man Jehovah." He was Jehovah by *nature*; he was the angel of Jehovah by *office*; and he was the man Jehovah by the *form* which he assumed. For, as a type of his future manifestation in the flesh, as a token of his divine philanthropy, and doubtless to afford the believing patriarchs and others some blessed experience of his condescending friendship and sympathy and love, as their "kinsman redeemer," he usually came to them "in the fashion of a man," and talked with them "as a man with his friend." And was not this exceedingly characteristic of Christ? Was it not becoming—was it not like—JEHOVAH JESUS? May not every one who knows *him*—knows him as the incarnate God, the sympathising High Priest of the church, the sinner's Friend—say, when he reads of these Old Testament manifestations—(as John said to Peter when their master appeared to them on the shore of the sea of Galilee after his resurrection)—"It is the LORD?" Yes

—it is plain and beyond rational question—the revealed God and conductor of divine providence, of the Old Testament ages, was and could be no other than “Immanuel—God with us!”

It would have been both interesting and instructive, could we now have gone over, in the light of this conclusion, the accounts given us of these manifestations of Christ in his pre-existing condition, and compared them with his character and actings in his incarnate condition. Such a review would serve a variety of important purposes. It would confirm the conclusion to which we have come. It would enable us the more perfectly to identify the philanthropy of the Old Testament Jehovah with the love of the New Testament Jesus, and the veiled glory of the New Testament Jesus with the revealed majesty of the Old Testament Jehovah. Light would doubtless be cast by it on many passages of Scripture. The whole history of divine providence and grace, from the beginning to the end of time, would be more clearly seen to be the development of one great purpose of manifold wisdom and boundless love. And above all, the saints of the Old Testament and New Testament ages, would be exhibited by it as constituting essentially *one Church* which, though under different dispensations—different ministrations of the Spirit, and measures of the gift of Christ,—has always had, really and spiritually, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

I cannot now attempt any such extensive review as this would be, but I may close these observations on the pre-existing condition of our blessed Lord with a few brief notices of one or two of his early manifestations. And let us begin with the very first of them, namely, his appearance to our first parents in

Eden immediately after the Fall. That the "Lord God," whose voice Adam and Eve heard—"walking in the garden in the cool of the day,"—was the second person of the Trinity, in his character as Mediator, is obvious from various considerations. His coming was both audible and visible; and therefore our fallen and self-condemned progenitors "hid themselves from his presence among the trees of the garden." He was not, then, the "invisible," but the revealed God. He came to pass a judgment on the transgressors,—both on our first parents, and on the still greater transgressor who had tempted and ruined them; and we know to whom all judgment has been committed: "The Father judgeth no man, (literally, "no one"—neither man nor devil), but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And, especially, he came to proclaim mercy; to announce the outlines and provisions of the everlasting "covenant of redemption"—"the counsel of peace;" and who therefore could he be but the "Messenger of the covenant—the Preacher and the Prince of peace?"¹ Thus our blessed Lord may be said to have appeared and acted on this occasion in a variety of characters, or as holding a variety of relations—all those, indeed, in which he was afterwards to be more fully revealed. He acted as the "Counsellor"—the fellow and equal and representative of the Father. He acted as the destroyer of Satan and his works—the captain of salvation, the champion of the oppressed, the representative of the predestined "seed of the woman." And he acted as the appointed Judge of the world; for as the course of time will close, so it may be said to have commenced, with a *universal judgment*—a judgment which reaches through all times and rules all events,

¹ Isa. ix. 6: Mal. iii. 1; Luke ii. 14; Eph. ii. 17.

which set all the known orders of moral agents in their appropriate places, and announced the great principles on which the mediatorial government of God in time was to be conducted : and as it will be in the one of these judgments, so was it in the other ; . Jehovah Jesus was Judge. Such was the variety of characters and relations in which our blessed Lord in this first manifestation appeared ; and the language in which he commenced his sentence on the transgressors, proclaiming destruction to the tempter and the means of recovery to the tempted, may be said to be suitable to all these characters and views of his person and work : “ I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” said he to the Serpent, “ and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Who could more appropriately proclaim himself the author of enmity between the Devil and the woman’s seed, than the slayer of the enmity, and the restorer of peace, between that seed and God ? And in what terms could he, in the circumstances, have more plainly and impressively spoken of his own future incarnate nature,—of his place as the *Head* of the woman’s seed,—of his atoning sufferings and death,—and of the destruction of the Devil and his works by that death, than these, “ It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ? ”

I pass over the many remarkable manifestations which our blessed Lord made of himself to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in virtue of which he was called “ their God ; ” his manifestations, especially, to the last of these patriarchs at Bethel and in Padan-arm, at Peniel and Beersheba,—in reference to which the dying patriarch could speak of him in Egypt as “ the God before whom his fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who fed him all his life long unto that day, the Angel who

redeemed him from all evil, the shepherd, the stone of Israel, and the mighty God of Jacob."¹ I go on to notice for a moment his appearance to Moses at the bush, and his manifestations to Israel in the wilderness, and at Sinai.² In these Christ may be said, in a special manner, to have exhibited himself and entered on the discharge of his functions, as the "Shepherd and King of Israel"—their "Lawgiver and Judge and Holy One;" and they are no less illustrative of his gentleness and long-suffering and faithfulness, than of his sovereign authority and power and majesty. They plainly indicate also both his divine nature and his mediatorial office; for he is at one time spoken of as the "I am," "Jehovah," the "God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob," and at another as the "angel of Jehovah," "the angel in whom the name of God was." It is unnecessary to enter into details; but when we think of him as the author of the miracles and plagues of Egypt, as the redeemer of Israel, and the destroyer of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,—to whom they sang "The LORD is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? The LORD shall reign for ever and ever;"³—when we think of him marching through the pathless wilderness, at the head of his redeemed nation, in his tabernacle of cloud dwelling, sending them bread from heaven and water from the rock, discomfiting their enemies, and bearing them as on eagles' wings;—and when especially we think of him coming down on Sinai, in fire and tempest, with ten thousand of his holy ones,

¹ Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; xlix. 24.

² Exod. iii. 1-17; xix. 17; xx. 21.

³ Exod. xv. 2-18.

and giving the law,—admitting Moses and the elders of Israel into his presence on the Mount, and entering into covenant with them,—or passing by Moses in the cleft of the rock, and proclaiming his name, “The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth;”¹—O what impressive and instructive views ought we to obtain of the majesty and grandeur, the sovereignty and power, as well as of the condescension and grace of “our Lord and our God,” Jesus Christ! Then all the ascriptions of power and glory to the Holy One of Israel, found in the Old Testament, and especially in the Psalms and Prophets, are seen to belong directly to him, and the whole Bible becomes full of his glory in a manner which could not otherwise be recognised. He continues to be “the Lord God of Israel—the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim”—down to the close of the Old Testament dispensation, when he passes from his tabernacle of *cloud* into his tabernacle of *flesh*, and the shadowy grandeur and terror of the Law are transformed into the peaceful and spiritual glory—“the grace and truth”—of the Gospel.

But are we sure that all this view of the manifestation of Christ, in his divine nature, under the Old Testament is not a mistake? Is it confirmed by New Testament inspiration? We answer it is. We have seen already that it is proclaimed in the beginning of John’s gospel, and there are many other passages of the New Testament in which it is implied. In a former discourse we showed that in the words “Before Abraham was, I am,” Jesus virtually identified himself with the Angel Jehovah of “the bush.” And in like manner when he said to his disciples “A *new* commandment I give unto you,” he virtually identified himself with the

¹ Exod. xvi. 4-35; xvii. 5-13; xix. 20; xx. 1-21; xxiv. 9-11; xxxiv. 6, 7.

giver of the *old* commandments of the Mosaic law. Who but *He* that gave the Law could either add to it or alter it? Paul also identifies him with the giver of the Law; for when he quotes the language of the 68th Psalm, as spoken of Christ,—“When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men,”—he plainly tells us that this also was said of him, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” And when, again, it is said of him in the epistle to the Hebrews, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth (or, *him giving oracles on earth*, i. e. on Sinai) much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh (giveth oracles) from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth,”—how plain is the inference that Jesus Christ, the person spoken of in the context—“Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant,”—was the giver of the law of Sinai?¹ But not to enlarge, I only remark further that when Christ drove out the buyers and sellers from the temple, and vindicated himself in doing so by these words, “Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations; but ye have made it a den of thieves,”—he probably designed to appropriate to himself the glory of the Divine inhabitant of the temple; and his beloved disciple certainly ascribes that glory to him when he quotes the language of Isaiah’s vision, and adds, “These things said Esaias when he saw *his* glory and spake of *him*.”²

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18; Eph. iv. 8-10; Heb. xii. 25, 26.—Some commentators understand “him that spake on earth” to be *Moses*. But the idea is refuted by the whole context. Moses did not give oracles (*χρηματίζω*) from Sinai; nor did the voice of Moses then shake the earth: on the other hand, “so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.”—*Vid. Owen in loc.*—“Unus est idemque, qui super terra, et qui ex coelis loquitur.”—*Bengel.*

² Mark xi. 17; John xii. 41. Comp. Isa. vi. 1-10.

In conclusion : this subject is fertile in practical instruction. It shows us for instance that the true knowledge of Jesus Christ is to be obtained from the Old Testament as well as from the New ; that the whole Bible is full of him ; that it is all "the word of Christ;" and that it becomes all who call themselves by his name to study it carefully, and have it dwelling in them richly. It opens up to us the ineffable grandeur and importance of that scheme of human salvation which the gospel unfolds; for if the author of this salvation was so glorious a being as we have endeavoured to show—if he was a Divine person, the fellow and equal of the eternal Father, the creator of the world, the possessor of heaven and earth,—if this salvation also was the product of an eternal counsel, in which all the persons of the Godhead had a place,—and if its foundation was laid in the atoning sufferings and death of God's dear Son—O how certain must it be that there is and can be no other salvation—"none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"—than that of Jesus Christ ! and that they who neglect this great salvation shall certainly perish—perish for ever ! Finally, this subject reminds us that the only way of obtaining this salvation is just by coming to the knowledge of Christ, and of God, as revealed in him ; "for this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "The true knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ is eternal life. A man cannot have the one without having the other ; a man has the one in the proportion in which he has the other." But let us add, that this knowledge of Christ, and of God in him, is not merely that which suffices for speculation about divine things, or for profession, or for talk. It is a knowledge of him that sheds abroad his love in our hearts, and generates love to

him in return. It is a knowledge that admits us to his fellowship, and calls us to his service. It is a knowledge that conforms us to his image, and prepares us for his glory. And this knowledge is to be obtained, through the Spirit, by believing the testimony of God concerning his Son. "That which we have seen and heard (said the beloved disciple) declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son; and this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written that ye may know that ye have eternal life, by believing on the name of the Son of God. And we know that the Son of God is come, and that he hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. **THIS IS THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE.**"

VI.

The Catholic Opinion.

Part Second.

THAT glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,

Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

MILTON.

Text.

Phil. ii. 5-11.—"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: The origin of the term *Messiah* or *Christ*—The work of Christ as Redeemer, corresponding to the fallen condition of man—Its three parts—Topics to be considered: I. **CHRIST INCARNATE:**—The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ—Its mysteriousness—Contrasts between the power of the divine, and the weakness of the human nature—The divine purpose in the incarnation—Necessary to the prophetic as well as the priestly work of Christ. II. **CHRIST CRUCIFIED:**—The importance of the doctrine of the cross—What meant by it—Scriptural representations of the nature and design of the sufferings of Christ—Milton's representations—Clarke—Channing—The love of God was the origin not the result of the death of Christ—The constitution of the person of Christ, as connected with the work of reconciliation—The purity of his human nature—The number and severity of his sufferings—Objections to the doctrine of the substitution and sacrifice of Christ. III. **CHRIST EXALTED:**—How the subject might be contemplated—The name given to Christ—His kingdom and work as exalted. **CONCLUSION.**

VI.

THE CATHOLIC OPINION.

PART SECOND.

WE come now to state the Catholic opinion concerning Jesus Christ in *his incarnate and exalted conditions*, and to speak shortly of his office and work as the Redeemer of man—the MESSIAH, or CHRIST.

Of the origin of this title it is hardly necessary to say anything. Prior to his appearance, his office and work were commonly, perhaps necessarily, set forth as resembling those of prophets, priests, and kings; and as among the Jews these officials were considered as the servants and deputies of God, and were consecrated to their work by the symbolical action of anointing them with oil, He, the promised redeemer, the chosen servant of the Father, was pre-eminently known and spoken of as “the Anointed One”—THE MESSIAH—THE CHRIST: “Behold my Servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him.” “I have found David my servant, and with my holy oil have I anointed him.” “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to

the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."¹

I have said that prior to his coming the office and work of the Redeemer were *perhaps necessarily* represented by those of prophets, priests, and kings; for it is worthy of remembrance that these offices were rendered necessary by the entrance of sin. They were temporary remedies for the evils which sin had introduced. But for sin, a prophet, priest, or king would never have existed on earth. There would have been no room for his office, no demand for his functions. Among the ancient people of God, therefore, these officials were really deputies of Christ, the divine "Shepherd of Israel," and their functions were a representative performance, partly symbolical and partly real, of the work of the Redeemer, suited to "the time then present." Hence the near connection of the Old Testament dispensation with that of the New, and the manifold illustration which the earthly things of the one throw on the heavenly things of the other. The one class contained the patterns of the other. "The law came by Moses, but the grace and the truth came by Jesus Christ."²

A full discussion of the office and work of Christ as the Redeemer would necessarily require a preparatory discussion of the doctrine of the Fall, and of the condition into which it has universally brought man. That

¹ Pa. lxxxix. 19, 20; Isa. xlii. 1; lxi. 1, 2.

² On this principle we may see why Cyrus should be called "The Lord's anointed" (Isa. xlv. 1), a title commonly given only to Jewish Kings. It was as deputed to accomplish a great deliverance for the Old Testament Church—her restoration from captivity—which was at once a real work of Christ as the King of Israel, and a symbol of the greater redemption which he should personally accomplish. Even Cyrus for the time was a representative of Christ—a deputy of Jehovah of hosts.—*Vid. Calvin, in loc.*

condition might be described with sufficient accuracy and fulness under three particulars:—*1st, Darkness*—ignorance of God and of Divine things—rendering a Divine instructor or prophet necessary to man's recovery; *2dly, Guilt*—liability to punishment on account of sin—rendering an atoning priest, one to “make reconciliation for iniquity,” equally necessary; and *3dly, Depravity*—comprehending in that term man's natural alienation of heart from God, his bondage to sin and Satan, and the misery which necessarily flows from these,—rendering as necessary as either of the preceding, a powerful redeemer—a redeemer by power as well as purchase—who is able to set man free and keep him free from these enemies and evils, and so to restore him to the love, fellowship, and obedience of God, and re-instate him in holy happiness for ever. So that the three-fold work of Christ, corresponding to this three-fold condition of fallen humanity and to the three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king, might be suitably described by the three words REVELATION, RECONCILIATION, REDEMPTION, (*i.e.* complete salvation); for these three words, largely taken, comprehend the whole scheme of Mediation,—the whole counsel and plan of God for the recovery of fallen Man.

But, while I set before you this comprehensive *vidimus* of the work of Christ as the Redeemer of man, because it may be useful to you, I have no intention of entering in this discourse on the survey of the wide field which it indicates. For, besides being much too extensive for the limits of a single discourse, that survey would necessitate the repetition of much which has already occupied our attention. All that I propose is, keeping this division in view, to make a few general, and somewhat desultory remarks on the three topics, naturally suggested by the passage of Scripture which we have

read as the text of this lecture, namely, *Christ incarnate, Christ crucified, Christ exalted.*

I.

CHRIST INCARNATE.

The Catholic doctrine on this subject is, that the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, by assuming complete but sinless human nature into personal and permanent union with his divine (without either nature being mixed with the other, or converted into the other, or changed in any of its essential properties) became *really* man, while he remained *truly* God. He "was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever." This, next to the doctrine of the Trinity, is the greatest mystery of the Christian system; and it is not less practically important. On it the reality and efficacy of the atonement, and all our faith and hope in Jesus Christ as a Saviour, must ever rest. These two truths, the supreme divinity and the true humanity of Jesus Christ, may be called the "Jachin and Boaz" of the temple of Christian truth. They stand at the entrance and sustain the superstructure of that temple; and, together, they constitute the GREAT MYSTERY OF GODLINESS. "The pillar and ground of the truth, and, without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."¹

When Moses saw in the wilderness "a bush burning with fire and not consumed," he was arrested by the strangeness and unaccountableness of the sight, and said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

the bush is not burned." When Solomon was dedicating the temple of Jerusalem, as a dwelling-place for the "Mighty God of Jacob," his spirit was so impressed with the seeming incompatibility and incredibility of the thought of the omnipresent Deity occupying so narrow and mean a habitation, that he exclaimed "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have builded!"¹ But a stranger sight, a far more wonderful thought—a thought startling and almost overwhelming both to reason and faith, of which this appearance of the angel Jehovah in the bush, and this residence of the omnipresent Deity in the temple of Jerusalem, were but the faint and transient shadows "cast before"—is presented to us in the incarnation of the Son of God. For in this we are called to see the fire of the divine glory and the fulness of the divine essence first enshrined in the frail body of a new-born infant, then tabernacling in the despised form of the "man of sorrows," and then spontaneously yielding up that body and the soul which animated it to ineffable agony and infamy and death, yet without even a momentary disjunction between his divine and human natures. The union of these was not, and could not be, affected by his sufferings or death. The union of the human soul and body was affected. That tie of nature was dissolved; but the mysterious tie which united both to his divine nature was not, and could not be, dissolved or even relaxed. The divine had married the human to itself for ever; and sooner might the pillars of the universe have been dissolved, or the throne of God have crumbled, than that union, on the continuance and results of which the pillars of the universe and the throne of the Eternal are now based,

¹ Exod. iii. 3; 1 Kings viii. 27.

have come to an end ! The incarnation of the Son of God was truly, then, a great mystery—a wonderful, nay a confounding event ! We need not be surprised that, besides being darkly indicated in type and emblem from the beginning of the world, it should have been, as time rolled on, spoken of in the language of prophecy as the greatest sign—the sublimest wonder of the world, or that the period allotted for its manifestation should have been described as the “fulness of the time :” “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign ; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name **IMMANUEL.**” “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called **WONDERFUL, COUNCILLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.**” “For, when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”¹

I do not think it necessary to dwell on the miraculous character of the birth of Jesus Christ ; and, as to the *manner* of the union of the divine and human natures in him, to do so would be unprofitable. To us that union is unsearchable. We cannot explain the connection of our own bodies and souls ; and how, then, should we pretend to search out that of the two natures of Christ ? It is enough to say of this union that it was as complete and intimate as it was designed to be permanent. The two natures constituted but one person ; and while, as we have hinted, they necessarily remained distinct—without mixture, or composition, or conversion, or change—each retaining its own essential properties and susceptibilities and powers, as truly and

¹ Isa. vii. 14 ; ix. 6 ; Gal. iv. 4, 5.

completely as if it had not been allied with the other, yet this alliance was so close that the actings and sufferings of both belonged to the one person, the God-man; and thus the properties of the one nature came to be ascribed to the other:—"The child born" was "the Wonderful, the Mighty God;" "The Lord of Glory" was "crucified;" "God purchased the Church with his own blood." And the "Living One, who was dead, and is alive again for evermore, is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."¹

But let us not on this account blend the two natures so as to make him in whom they dwelt neither God nor man, but something different from either, or between the two. This, I suspect, is often done, and is our greatest danger in the present day. For we seldom recognise as we might and ought, I fear, either the power and glory of Christ's divinity, or the reality and frailty of his humanity: so that, while denouncing the creed of the Arian or Socinian or Deist, we may, very possibly, be almost as far as he from believing the truth about the person of Jesus Christ in his incarnate state. Yet the danger has been well guarded against by the "Spirit of truth." In all the gospels, and especially in that of John, many incidents have been recorded in which these two opposite and amazing features of Immanuel's person—the glory of his divine, and the weakness of his human nature—have been brought, as if designedly, into near and striking contrast, that we might mark them and wonder and believe.

Look, for instance, at Him—the mighty God, who made and sustains the universe—sitting beside Jacob's well. He is weary with travel, oppressed by the noon-

¹ Acts xx. 28; Rev. i. 8, 18.

day sun, as well as faint with hunger and thirst. He was unable to accompany his hardier disciples to the neighbouring town, and has sat down by the wayside to await their return. O what proofs of human weakness are here! Yet at the very same time he performs—performs without effort, as if it were nothing and required neither thought nor labour,—one of the greatest works of divine wisdom and power:—he searches and changes the heart of a wicked and abandoned woman!¹

Look, again, at Him, “who hath gathered the winds in his fists, and measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,” crossing the sea of Galilee in a fishing boat. He is again overborne by toil and anxiety and falls asleep in the open vessel, on the open sea. The tempest fails to arouse or to disturb him. He lies as helpless and unconscious, in his humanity, and sleeps as sweetly, as a babe. O what a peaceful sight to look upon, in the midst of danger and terror! The trembling fishermen look on and wonder. At last, in their alarm, they awake him, crying “Master, master, we perish!” when, without a moment’s hesitation, or deliberation, or doubt, he rises and rebukes the wind, and says to the sea, “Peace, be still.” And immediately there is a great calm!²

Observe him once more at the grave of Lazarus. Now, his own bosom is tossed like the troubled sea with impetuous and opposing though sinless passions—yes, I say, holy passions; for, while the sad appeals of Martha and Mary have melted him to sympathetic and unwilling tears, the hypocrisy and villany of the Jews around have filled him with holy anger and disgust. “He groaned in spirit and was troubled.” He approached the grave, groaning and weeping, unable to restrain himself even in the presence of his enemies. But, after

¹ John iv. 5-30.

² Mark iv. 35-39; Luke viii. 22-25.

a moment more, and a word of grateful acknowledgment to his Father, he stands beside the open grave, and in all the majesty of his Godhead cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes." O how clearly do we see both his manhood and his Godhead here!¹

But the most impressive of all such contrasts is to be witnessed in his own tomb, and at the moment of his own resurrection. The moment before, *there* lies—chained in death, the captive of the grave—all that is visible of his human nature. That human nature has no more power than the clod of the valley to wake itself to life. Nay, on it lies a curse which would have sunk all creation to perdition, and, till that curse be removed, no power in the universe can loose the bands of death, and re-unite the separated elements of his humanity. But there is power in his divinity to accomplish both of these things; and the moment after, that lifeless clay has risen up a quickened, glorious, spiritual body—full of life, full of power, full of majesty—a suitable and incorruptible temple for his eternal divinity; and he is prepared to sit down on the throne of universal empire, at the right hand of the Father, to sway the sceptre of righteousness, and to be acknowledged and worshipped as God by every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.

To discuss fully the divine purpose in the incarnation of the Son of God, or attempt to unfold "the manifold wisdom of God" involved in that incarnation, would both carry us beyond the design of these discourses, and bring us into depths into which it might not be safe to venture; but one or two remarks on the point

¹ John xi. 33-44.

may not be unsuitable here.—It has sometimes been contended that the incarnation of the Son of God would have been necessary for the glory of God and the good of creation, and would therefore have taken place, though man had never sinned, and a mediatorial economy, properly so called, never been introduced. But this idea, besides being presumptuous and unpractical, plainly conflicts with many statements of Scripture: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil.” “Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.”¹

In these and such like scriptures the incarnation of Christ is spoken of in connection chiefly with his priestly office and work—the work of atonement, or “making reconciliation for the sins of the people;” but we ought not on this account to conclude that it had no connection with the other parts or functions of his mediation—those of revelation and redemption. The work of the Mediator, though thus distinguishable into different parts, is, like his seamless vesture, one glorious, indivisible work. You cannot separate one of its parts without destroying the whole; and he, when performing one function, was performing the others also. He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” The glory of God was revealed in his person, and actings,

¹ 1 John iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14, 17; x. 5.—See Owen on the Heb., vol. ii., 26th *Prel. Ex.*; Calvin's *Inst. B. ii. ch. 12.*

and sufferings, as well as by his teaching ; and never did that glory shine out with greater effulgence "in the face of Jesus" than when he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Then was "the Son of Man glorified, and God was glorified in him."¹

We need not hesitate to affirm, then, that the incarnation of Christ was necessary to his prophetic as well as to his priestly work, and that none but a Divine person in human nature could have performed either. True, if the revelation which Christ came to convey to our world had been what Socinians and others have imagined,—a mere republication of the truths of natural religion, with new illustrations and sanctions—a second and illustrated edition, so to call it, of the lessons of Nature about God and virtue—then, doubtless, the incarnation of a Divine person would have been altogether unnecessary—would have been a causeless waste of divine expedients and means. Not even the descent of an angel was necessary for this. Nay, not even a Moses or a Daniel was required. A Socrates or a Newton, suitably trained, and providentially directed, would have been sufficiently qualified for conveying such instruction to his fellow-men. And Socinians, therefore, are so far consistent, when, having this idea of the Christian revelation, they make our blessed Lord a mere man, and reduce his gifts, and those of inspired men generally, to the level of the attainments of other men—mere fallible men—of profound genius and great learning. But if the Christian revelation be a system of truth which Nature never taught, and never could teach ; if it unfold a method of salvation for guilty, lost men—"a mystery which from the beginning of the world was hid in God ;" if its grand design be to make known not so much the natural perfections as the secret pur-

¹ John xiii. 31 ; xvii. 1-4.

poses of God—the sovereign counsel of his will in reference to a sin-burdened and disordered and perishing world; if, in a word, the central announcement of that revelation be that a Divine person in human nature “has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,—for God so loved the world that he gave his own Son that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life,”—then, unquestionably, the incarnation of the Son of God was as necessary to the full revelation, as to the actual accomplishment of this counsel of God. The full revelation and the actual accomplishment go together. The one was not—we may safely say, could not have been—given, understood, and believed, without the other. Accordingly, I would remind you that though Christ commenced his prophetic work long before he came in the flesh, and though he continued it after he had again withdrawn, bodily, from our world,—all his revelations have had a reference to his incarnate condition. The Old Testament revelation had a prospective, and the New Testament revelation has a retrospective reference to the person and work of the “Word made flesh.” The former, like a mystic *speculum* revealed him in shadowy outline before he appeared, and cast back the dim radiance of his glory to the very beginning. The latter, like a plain mirror, or like a sun-drawn portrait, reveals him, in definite form and feature, after he has passed, and will continue to preserve his image before the eyes of men to the very end. But neither could have served this purpose without *himself*; neither, indeed, could have existed without him. They are but the reflections; he is the reality. He—the Incarnate and Crucified One—is the sum and substance, the foundation and fulness, the subject and source, of divine revelation. He is himself “the Truth” and “the Light,” and “for this end

was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, that he should bear witness to the truth."

But the purpose of God in the incarnation of his Son will be more fully seen in connection with the next topic, "Christ crucified;" and we may leave this by repeating the words of the apostle, "Great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the flesh!" and adding, with Bishop Hall, "O the height and depth of this super-celestial mystery; that the Infinite Deity and finite flesh should meet in one subject! yet so as the humanity should not be absorbed of the Godhead, nor the Godhead co-arcted (straitened or restrained) by the humanity; but both inseparably united: that the Godhead is not humanised, the humanity is not deified; both are indivisibly conjoined; conjoined so, as without confusion distinguished. O mystery of Godliness, incomprehensibly glorious! Cease, cease, O human curiosity; and where thou canst not comprehend, wonder and adore!"

II.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

The doctrine of "the Cross of Christ," or "Christ crucified," is the most precious and central part of the Christian system, to which all we have already said, both in this and the preceding discussions, has a specific reference, and from which all derives its value. For, irrespective of this doctrine, all that we have said or could say of Christ would be but aimless and inconclusive speculation. The cross of Christ is the *focus*, in which all the glory of the character and perfections and counsels of God, as revealed in him, meet. In it God is most clearly seen to be light and love. In it "mercy and truth meet together—righteousness and peace embrace each other;" God is exhibited as just yet mer-

ciful, holy yet gracious, true to his own word, yet gentle, and forgiving, and unspeakably tender-hearted, to sinners of mankind—"the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."—Yet, strange to say, this is the doctrine of the Christian system which, above all others, has roused the opposition of men against that system. It was from the first "a stumbling-block to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek," and it remains so still; for, it may be safely said that, were it not for this doctrine of the cross of Christ, there would be much less disposition and effort among self-approving moralists and self-conceited rationalists either to disprove the divinity of Christ, or to reject revelation altogether. The doctrine of the Cross and the doctrine of the divinity of Christ necessarily go together. If he was a mere man, or less than a Divine person, he could not have made an adequate atonement for sin; and if he did make such an atonement he must have been more than man, or angel, or archangel; he must have been "God manifest in flesh"—"IMMANUEL."

But, however important this doctrine of the cross of Christ, it is not my design to dwell long upon it at present. What I propose is to state as shortly as possible what we mean by "the Cross of Christ," or Reconciliation by the cross; to allude to the constitution of Christ's person as qualifying him for effecting this reconciliation; and then notice some objections which have been, and continue to be, brought against this great cardinal doctrine of the Christian system.

(1.) As to what is meant by the expression "the Cross of Christ," I need hardly remark that all the humiliation and sufferings of the sinless Saviour in the flesh are included in it. We do not limit its import merely

to the fact that Christ was suspended, as if he had been a malefactor, on the cursed tree, and that after six hours of agony and shame "he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." That was but the closing scene—the final action of the great drama of "Christ crucified;" and this expression is to be understood as comprehending, along with it, all that he underwent of humiliation and suffering from the manger to the cross—all that is included in the words of the text: "Being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto (all the way to) death, even the death of the cross."

As to the purpose of the sufferings of Christ, or the principle on which reconciliation for sin was effected by them, it is impossible to find or fancy plainer language than that of Scripture itself, both of the Old Testament and the New. "Messiah shall be cut off but not for himself." "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned away every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he made his soul an offering for sin." "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be

just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”¹
—What language can be conceived plainer than that of these and many other such like passages of holy writ? It is almost a work of supererogation to state what is its great idea, namely, That when man had sinned, and so brought on himself not only the moral disapprobation but the judicial condemnation of the sovereign Lawgiver and Judge—when he had incurred the penalty of the violated law—and when, therefore, God, however disposed to pardon the sinner, could not, consistently with His righteousness and truth and the interests of His government, pass by, or connive at, the sin,—this was the astonishing-contrivance of divine wisdom and love, for the salvation of man:— That Jesus Christ, His only-begotten and well-beloved Son in human nature, should become man’s substitute, and endure the wrath of God on account of sin—the penalty of the law—in his stead; and thus expiate or “put away sin by the sacrifice of *himself*.” I state this idea thus definitely and fully, because never, I believe, were more desperate efforts made than in the present day, both by the avowed enemies of Christianity and by its pretended friends, to take the doctrine of the substitution and sacrifice of Christ out of the Scriptures; not only by denying and reviling it, but especially by mystifying it—involving it in the clouds of an ungodly metaphysics—and thus “spoiling” the simple Christian of his faith and hope, “through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Well has it been said: “If the vicarious nature of our Lord’s sufferings is not stated in such words as those which we have quoted in illustration of it, we may very safely say that

¹ Dan. ix. 26; Isa. liii. 4-10; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 2 Cor. v. 18-21; Rom. iii. 25, 26.

it is impossible that it should be revealed ; for language furnishes no terms more clear and unequivocal to express this idea than those which have been employed. If God had intended to convey the idea, he could not have used words better calculated for this purpose. No ingenuity can ever torture them into the natural expression of any other meaning.”¹

Though this is not a matter in which the authority of great names is of any value ; though, in receiving and maintaining it, the most illiterate and simple-minded Christian—who

“ Just knows, and knows no more, his Bible true”—

may warrantably and safely stand up against the whole world ; yet I cannot but remind you here how pointedly and soundly—though in a poetical shape—Milton has given this doctrine : and I do so the more readily just because he was so lamentably wrong on other parts of the doctrine of Christ. In his *Paradise Lost*, he represents the Son of God, in the heavenly counsel, thus offering himself as man’s substitute :

“ Father, thy word is past, Man shall find grace ;
And shall not grace find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy winged messengers ?—

* * * Man,

Atonement for himself or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring :
Behold me then ; me for him, life for life
I offer ; on me let thine anger fall ;
Account me man ; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well-pleased ; on me let death wreck all his rage.”

To which the Eternal Father thus replies—accepting and authorizing the generous and self-sacrificing proposal of the Eternal Son :—

¹ “ The Sufferings and Glory of the Messiah.” By J. Brown, D.D., p. 218.

" O thou in Heaven and Earth the only peace
 Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
 My sole complacence ! Well thou knowest how dear
 To me are all my works, nor Man the least
 Though last created ; that for him I spare
 Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
 By losing thee a while, the whole race lost.
 Thou therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
 Their nature also to thy nature join ;
 And be thyself Man among men on earth,
 Made flesh when time shall be, of virgin seed,
 By wondrous birth : be thou in Adam's room
 The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.

* * * *

.So Man, as is most just,
 Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,
 And dying rise, and rising with him raise
 His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life."¹

There may be expressions in these extracts to be questioned or explained ; but how pointedly is the doctrine of the substitution and sacrifice of Christ contained in them ! and what a pity that in his " Paradise Regained," in which he was called to treat more directly and fully of redemption by the blood of Christ, Milton so miserably failed to come up to the dignity of his theme ! In pleasing poetry—in smooth and flowing verse, the one poem is not inferior—it is perhaps superior, to the other ; but in epic dignity, in dramatic grandeur and comprehensiveness, and especially in scriptural truth, there is an immeasurable inferiority. And who can tell what British literature and orthodoxy have lost thereby ?

I may take the opportunity of stating here, that another eminent name, to which in previous discourses we have referred, is on this subject clearly on the side of the truth : I mean Dr Samuel Clarke, who, in various parts of his works states very plainly and scrip-

¹ Par. Lost, III., 227, 274.

turally the doctrine of reconciliation by the substitutionary sufferings and death of Christ : though, how he explained this doctrine consistently with his views of Christ's dependent and secondary divinity, I do not pretend to know. But not so another much-applauded individual, to whose sentiments we have repeatedly alluded. Dr Channing, the eloquent and plausible Socinian, reviles the doctrine of the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty with unexampled and grotesque bitterness—grotesque both for its shamelessness and inconsistency. He pronounces it *absurd—the fiction of theologians*—than which “a scheme, more fitted to obscure the brightness of Christianity and the mercy of God, or less suited to give comfort to a guilty and troubled mind, could not easily be framed !” Deceitfully labouring to caricature and pervert the doctrine by setting it in false lights—lights which no intelligent Christian would accept—he boldly asserts that there is not *one word* which he can find in all the scriptures—“not a text which even hints at these strange doctrines.” Yet with glaring inconsistency he allows that “many of us (unitarians) think that the Scriptures ascribe the remission of sins to Christ's death, with an emphasis so peculiar that we ought to consider this event as having *a special influence in removing punishment*, though Scripture may not reveal the way in which it contributes to this end !” These are his own words : so that, according to him, scripture contains not a word or text implying that Christ removed the punishment of sin from us *in the way of bearing it himself*. In Dr Channing's bible there were no such statements as those which we have already cited ; nor were any such words as those of Christ himself to be found in it : “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. This is my blood

of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."¹ Dr Channing's New Testament must have been purged of all such statements as these: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."² Nor could there have been any "Revelation of Jesus Christ" in it, containing the adoring ascriptions of the redeemed around the throne to a "Lamb as it had been slain:" "Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."³ How lamentably blinded must this man have been by prejudice and pride! How dangerous must his writings be to the young and inconsiderate!

It is proper to remark here, that when we say that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself," we do not understand that the substitution and death of Christ in the room of the guilty were either designed or necessary to make God merciful, or to dispose him to forgive. This is a view of the doctrine of the atonement frequently to be found in the books of the enemies of catholic Christianity; but it is a misrepresentation of that doctrine unworthy of a candid mind. Every intelligent Christian believes, and rejoices to believe, that the mercy of God—his free and compassionating love to man—his disposition to forgive, was the origin and not the result of the atonement of Christ; that the love of the Father and of the Son are one love in different forms; and that what is meant by God's being satisfied

¹ Mat. xx. 28; xxvi. 28.

² Rev. v. 9, 10.

³ John i. 29; 1 Cor. v. 7; Gal. iii. 13.

or pacified by the death of his Son is that,—his death being in the sight of God fitted to secure all the interests of the divine moral government and serve all the ends for which the punishment of sin was ordained, as well as, or much better than, the punishment of the sinner himself could have done,—therefore God, as the sovereign ruler, the supreme magistrate of the universe, was, in his love and pity, well pleased to accept the one in the place of the other, and has in consequence now proclaimed himself in Christ as reconciled—“rich in mercy and ready to forgive—well pleased for his righteousness’ sake, because he has magnified the law and made it honourable—a just God and yet a Saviour.” O how noble and honourable a view of the character of “the God, the Judge of all,” is this! And how well fitted, when it is studied and understood, and when the way of reconciliation is apprehended and believed, to disarm enmity, to dispel terror, to inspire confidence and love, and to lead the penitent sinner to holiness and joy!

(2.) The wonderful constitution of Christ’s person, qualifying him for this work of reconciliation, however lofty and inviting the theme, must be dismissed with a very few sentences.—We have already seen that even for the perfect discharge of his prophetic office Christ required to be both God and man; but the necessity is more evident in the case of his priestly office. I only state the following propositions on the subject, which, had time permitted, might have been largely sustained and illustrated:—(1st.) Without being man, Christ as a priest could have had no appropriate sacrifice to offer—no suitable life to give in the room of the sinner’s; and without being God, he would have had no right to offer it—it would not have been his own to give. (2d.)

Without being man, he could not have legally interfered in the quarrel between God and man. All law (like the Old Testament law of the "near kinsman") resists the interference of a mere unrelated stranger with its operations, and especially with its claims over a transgressor. A mediator must first show his right to interpose, and if he cannot, he is set aside as "meddling with strife belonging not to him." But, on the other hand, without being God, this interposition of Christ could not have availed to settle the quarrel, or allay the strife between God and man. It might have increased the offence or embittered the enmity; but it could not have slain that enmity and established peace. (3d.) Without being man—truly man—Christ could not have "borne *our* sicknesses and carried *our* sorrows;" whatever sufferings he endured would not have been either partially or wholly the penalty due to man. And without being God, his bearing these would not have sufficed for their being borne away from us. Either he would have been unable to exhaust the curse of sin, or he would have perished under it; and thus, instead of removing it, he would only have left it more hopelessly on the head of man. (4th.) In a word, without being man, Christ, as a high priest, could not have possessed and displayed that sympathy for man which his office required; and without being God, he could not have understood God's claims, or sympathized with Him, in the manner necessary for the discharge of that office. Why? he could not even have comprehended the sublime, the vast, the infinite, and eternal interests he had undertaken to maintain; and how then could God have accepted him as an umpire? Could He put the honours of His character, and the claims of His law, and all the interests of His universe, into the hands of an *agent* who had neither a mind to comprehend, nor

power to sustain them? O sinner, the enterprise of your salvation was a strangely peculiar and an amazingly difficult enterprise, and well might it be asked concerning him who undertook it, "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God?"

Add to these thoughts concerning the constitution of Christ's person the consideration of the singularity of his human nature, arising from his miraculous birth: Though a real man, woman-born, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," and though also "the Son of Man" as being the most perfect specimen of humanity that ever appeared on earth, he was not, in the ordinary sense, a child of Adam. He never would have existed as a man under the constitution of which Adam was the head; and he had therefore, personally and inherently, no share in either the condemnation or the corruption which that constitution entailed. He came to introduce a new constitution, and be himself a "second Adam;" and it behoved him, while "taking part of our flesh and blood," to be altogether free, personally, both from our curse and from our impurity. "Such an high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Accordingly it was so. Even from his birth his human nature, though born of a sinful woman, was a "holy thing;" and through all his life, though "made sin for us, he knew no sin," but remained in himself "Jesus Christ the righteous." O what a wondrous truth again! and how much depends upon it! For could it be gainsaid, his substitution in the room of the guilty would have been a delusion, and his making reconciliation for iniquity a dream. God could not accept one guilty and polluted sinner as a ransom for another. The blood that could alone redeem us must be that of "a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Once more, add to these thoughts about the person and the purity of Christ the remembrance of the number, the variety, the sources, and the immeasurable intensity of his sufferings, and you will then have before you the chief elements of the doctrine of reconciliation—the great outlines of the portrait of CHRIST CRUCIFIED FOR US. I do not enter into the detail of these sufferings. I merely remind you that they were those of a lifetime,—that for the space of a generation they were endured without interruption. They were of all possible kinds: all the inflictions and sorrows which human flesh or human spirit can endure (save those which spring from indwelling sin and a wicked life) were endured by him, and that too in a form and degree which other men never could experience. They came from all quarters: the hand of God, the hands of men, and the power and rage of devils all conspired, in different ways and for different reasons, to heap upon him immense, unutterable sorrow. They were, in a word, truly infinite—immeasurable sufferings; for as he had a profound sensitiveness to shame and suffering for sin, and at the same time a power of endurance which none but himself ever had, O what must have been the breadth and length and depth and height of that ocean of sorrow through which he had to swim, and in which he was at the very point of sinking! Think of his agony for one hour in the garden under the hand of his Father; think of his sufferings, for more than twelve hours in succession, in the High Priest's palace, in Pilate's judgment-hall, and at Golgotha; think of the shame and agony and darkness and terror which clothed him—the floods of ungodly men and raging demons that came round about him—on the cross, when his human strength “was dried up like a potsherd,” and his Father's presence and countenance

were hid from him ;—think I say of these things, remembering at once his human delicacy and purity and his divine dignity, and say what mind of man or angel can pretend to measure or weigh or comprehend the load of suffering—the punishment for sin—the death which is the wages of sin—which was laid on him in our stead. None can comprehend them. But his strong crying and tears, his bloody sweat, his “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*,” his last complaint “*I thirst*,” and his loud shout of victory “IT IS FINISHED !” are the best evidences to all both that his atoning sufferings were immeasurably great, and that they were completely sufficient for the end in view with them.

’Tis finish’d—was his latest voice ;
These sacred accents o’er,
He bow’d his head, gave up the ghost,
And suffered pain no more.
’Tis finish’d—the Messiah dies
For sins, but not his own ;
The great redemption is complete,
And Satan’s power o’erthrown.

(3.) The principal objections which have been stated or insinuated against the doctrine of the substitution and sacrifice of Christ in the room of the guilty, may, I apprehend, be summed up in these three :—*First*, that such a sacrifice was not necessary ; *second*, that it was not possible ; and *third*, that, if possible, it would not have been just in God to inflict the punishment due to the guilty on one who was innocent. Let us glance at these objections in order, for a moment.

The *necessity* of any such measure as the substitution and sacrifice of Christ in the room of the guilty is denied chiefly by those who think sin—the violation of the divine moral law—so venial a matter that it might safely be overlooked ; or who regard God as a

being of so easy and soft benevolence that he could not have the heart to punish it as it deserves ; or who deem man, though a sinner, so inherently pure and self-sufficient as to be able, by repentance and amendment and good works, to make all the atonement for his own sin that God can require.—Now to this, it is almost enough to say that it exalts man at the expense of the truth and purity and righteousness of God. For if sin could be forgiven without being punished, why did God say that he would punish it ? Why has he actually punished it, and punished it in some cases so severely ? And why does he still threaten it with that tremendous retribution which Scripture speaks of as the portion of sinners in another world ? Is the God of truth a liar—a deceiver ? Are the terrors of everlasting perdition a mere bugbear which the soft and easy and weak parent of the human race employs only to frighten his offending children withal, but which his heart will never allow him to inflict ? God forbid that any of us should think so of “the Judge of all the earth !” or that we should risk the result !—As to repentance and amendment and good works being a sufficient atonement for sin, it is enough to say that these are not *punishment*, and can never occupy the place of punishment, or answer the just claims of law on the guilty. No government in heaven or earth could be conducted on the principle that punishment should be remitted as soon as the sinner repented, and promised amendment. Any magistrate who acted on it would be a cruel—a merciless and unjust—tyrant, the protector of crime, the oppressor of innocence and worth. Besides, true repentance presupposes reconciliation. It supposes the Judge and the sinner to be again at one—having one mind, one heart. And how can this reconciliation have been effected ? What can have bridged over the great gulf

between them? The condemning Judge cannot have come down to be of one mind with the guilty sinner: and is it the guilty sinner, then, that has come up to be of one mind with the condemning Judge, and who has presented himself with unpresumptuous confidence before His bar, while yet He remains a "consuming fire?" Sooner would that sinner, like the remorseful traitor, go spontaneously "to his own place," and seek to hide his guilty soul in the bottom of hell.

"Try what repentance can: what can it not?

And yet what can it, when one cannot repent?"

As to the *impossibility* of an innocent substitute suffering the punishment of sin in the room of the guilty, the real or pretended difficulty seems to be this: 'The innocent victim cannot truly become guilty, and therefore the infliction of suffering on him is not *the punishment of sin* at all, but rather the oppression of innocence.'—In this objection, however, it is forgotten that there are two things involved in guilt, namely *blame-worthiness*, and *liability to punishment*, the one of which cannot, and the other can, be transferred from one person to another. We see the transference of the latter in thousands of instances, every day. How often do parents suffer, and suffer according to law, *i.e.* are punished, for the sins of their children; and children for the sins of their parents; and brother for brother; and the innocent for the guilty? In every case of suretyship—in every case of partnership—when the surety or the partner is compelled to pay the debt for which he is legally bound, but which he had no hand in incurring,—the liability of suffering, without the blame of sinning, is transferred from the sinner to his substitute; and this suffering is *punishment*, though laid on the innocent, for it is the claim of Justice and the award of Law.—Another thing which the objector forgets is that Christ was

perfectly voluntary in taking on him the sins of guilty men ; and that, in that case, so far was his perfect innocence from being an obstacle, it was the very thing which rendered the transference of their guilt—their liability to punishment—to him possible. Suppose Adam had in pity for Cain been willing to take on himself the guilt of Abel's blood, and bear the curse in the room of his first-born,—the difficulty would not have been that he was altogether innocent of the shedding of that blood which cried from the ground for vengeance ; no, the difficulty would have been that he had to answer for his own sins,—that he was condemned already,—and that all that any sinner could ever do was to bear both the blame and the punishment of his own offences. But in the case of Christ, as I have already hinted, this difficulty had no place ; nor was there any other real difficulty that imagination can frame, or reason support. He was entirely free from all sin—all liability to suffer, for himself ; he was our near kinsman, entirely spontaneous in his engagement to suffer for us ; he had the right—the divine and unchallengeable right, to give his own life a sacrifice, for it was his own ; and his eternal Father consented to and authorised the substitution. The glory of his person and the dignity of his character made his death a more magnificent atonement to justice and law than the complete and eternal punishment of the sinner himself could have been ; and it was at the same time an equally magnificent—an ineffably glorious—display of divine wisdom and benignity and love.¹

¹ “ It is evidently neither impossible nor unjust to punish one for another's offence ; and the matter only seems harsh to such as have misshapen to themselves the notion of punishment, and make it only correspond to the appetite of private revenge : whereas it only answers to a just will of vindicating the rights and honour of government ; which may most fitly be done upon another than the offender, not at random, or in an undistinguishing promiscuous hurry, but upon the two suppositions mentioned by the above

But here comes in the third objection which we have mentioned : ‘ That it would have been *unjust*, and altogether *unworthy of God*, to inflict unspeakable agonies on his own innocent and blessed Son, in the room of guilty men.’ And in our day, alas, this objection to the doctrine of the Cross is not confined to Socinians and infidels, and such like, but is publicly avowed and bitterly expressed even by professedly Christian men and Christian ministers, by popular preachers of the Gospel, and professors of Christian Theology.—This would “make God Almighty,” say the objectors, “act like a passionate man that killed his son when he could not revenge himself in any other way.” It would “represent Him in terms which better describe the ungoverned rage of Saul, missing his stroke at David, who has offended, and in disappointed fury dashing his javelin at his own son Jonathan.” It supposes “that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, has erected a gallows in the midst of the universe, and publicly executed upon it, in the room of the offenders, an infinite being, the partaker of his own supreme divinity.” “Was it that God was angry,” say they again, “and needed to be propitiated like some heathen deity of old?—a thought which refutes itself by the very indignation which it calls up in the human bosom.” Such are the bitter, passionate terms in which presumptuous men have spoken, and still speak, of that ineffable mystery of divine righteousness and love ex-

recited author (Grotius de Satisfact.): 1. If there be a near conjunction between the person punished, and the person offending. 2. If there be a consent and voluntary susception of the former on behalf of the other. And we may add, as a 3. Especially if there be thereupon a legal substitution, the supreme ruler upon that consent also agreeing,—providing, by a special law made in the case, for such transferring of the guilt and punishment. All which have so eminently concurred in the present case, that it can proceed from nothing but a disposition to cavil, further to insist and contend about it.”—*The Living Temple, by John Howe.*

hibited in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Now what do they mean by it? Do they mean to deny that the innocent and holy Lamb of God *did* suffer unspeakable agonies? Do they mean to insinuate that the scenes of Gethsemane and Golgotha were mere dreams or vain shows? Or do they mean to say that “God Almighty, the Creator,” had no hand in inflicting these agonies? Will they contradict or gainsay the suffering Saviour’s own words, “The cup which my Father giveth me shall I not drink it?” And if not, what then would they have? Would they have that infliction of God’s wrath on Christ which they say is *unjust* when there was the truest and grandest of all reasons for it—the punishment of sin, the vindication of righteousness, the maintenance of law,—to become *just* if there were no reason—no definable or intelligible reason—for it at all?¹ Whatever they mean, or would have, I am persuaded that there lurks under all such representations a secret, perhaps, but real denial of the divinity of Christ—of his oneness with the Father. In the case of the Socinian and infidel this is patent; in the case of the so-called Christian divine, it is I suspect not less

¹ “It may perhaps be alleged by some,—That it seems an unrighteous thing (that) God should appoint his own innocent Son to be punished for the sins of offending creatures, and let them escape. And then how could an unjust act make for the honour of his justice, or that which was in itself unfit, be a fit means to any good end? The loud clamours wherewith some later contenders have filled the Christian world upon this subject, make it fit to say somewhat of it; and the thing itself needs not that we say much. We do know that the innocent Son of God was crucified; we know it was by God’s determinate counsel; we know it was for the sins of men (which the adversaries, in a laxer and less significant sense, deny not, though it must by no means be understood, say they, as a punishment of those sins); we know many of those sinners do finally escape deserved punishment. The truth of these things, in fact, is disputed on neither side: all these then are acknowledged reconcilable and consistent with the justice of God. What then is to be inferred? Not that these things are not so,—for that they are is acknowledged on all hands. What then? That God is unjust? Will their zeal for the reputation of God’s justice admit of this? No; for it is only unjust to count this suffering of his Son a punishment: that is, ‘tis unjust he should suffer for

certain though unconfessed. For suppose it had been possible (*i.e.* consistent with the relations of the Trinity) for the eternal Father himself to become man, and endure the penalty of the law in the room of the guilty—suppose that he had done so—where would have been the ground for these representations and reproaches then? Would there have been any display of injustice, or of passion, or of implacable revenge, then? And what was the act of the Father in consenting to the substitution of His well-beloved and only-begotten Son, and inflicting the penalty of sin on him, but an act of the same character—the same ineffable love and condescension and grace, as well as unspotted holiness and righteousness and truth—as if He had given Himself? If the Father loved the Son, and if we may judge at all of the heart of God from that of a good man—from that of Abraham, for instance, when called to sacrifice Isaac—may we not fearlessly assert that the eternal Father, had it been possible, would have been as ready to subject himself to the penalty of his own law in the room of the guilty, as he was to say to the sword of justice, “Awake O Sword against my Shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow: Smite

a valuable and necessary purpose; not that he should suffer needlessly, or for no purpose that might not have been served without it! But why may not the sufferings of Christ be looked on as a punishment? Because they will have it to be essential to punishment that it be inflicted on the person that offended; and then inconsistent with its notion and essence, that it be inflicted on an innocent person. But if so, the pretence for the cry of injustice vanishes, unless they will be so absurd as to say,—It is very just to afflict an innocent person, but not to punish him; when the punishment hath no more in it of real evil to him that suffers it, than the admitted affliction. And when they say—The very notion of punishment carries in it an essential respect to that personal guilt of him that bears it, it implies that in the present case punishment hath no place, not because it is unjust, but because it is impossible. In the meantime how vain and ludicrous is the pretence, that all the real evil which God determined should befall his Son he should let come upon him with acknowledged justice, but that the injustice must lie only in a notion; *i.e.* if he look upon it only as a punishment.”—*The Living Temple.*

the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones?"¹

I conclude these observations on "the Cross of Christ"—"Christ crucified"—with the remark, that we ought the more to hold fast the doctrine of the substitutionary and penal nature of the sufferings of Christ, not only *notwithstanding*, but *on account of*, such objections which are brought against it. These objections illustrate "the offence of the cross," and are confirmatory rather than otherwise of the truth of the doctrine. For had that doctrine ceased to be what it has always been, and what, while human nature remains the same, it must continue to be,—to the self-righteous "Jew a stumbling-block," and to the self-conceited "Greek foolishness,"—we would have one proof less than we have of its being "a doctrine according to godliness"—"the power of God and the wisdom of God." Let us then hold it fast, and humbly and earnestly submit our minds and hearts to its power. The cross of Christ stands in the innermost shrine—the holy of holies—of the temple of revealed truth, the attraction of all unscaled eyes, the admiration and delight of all contrite and unsophisticated hearts. Of what other object or idea do inspired men speak with such an emphasis of wonder and joy as of this: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins!" And why? Doubtless because all the other great objects and ideas of divine revelation are not only included in this, but seen to be illustrated and reconciled and confirmed by it. By the cross of Christ, God is manifested and glorified, and man saved; angels are con-

¹ See Appendix, Note VII.

firmed and devils spoiled; sin is condemned and death abolished; heaven is opened and hell shut up for ever. For the cross of Christ will doubtless continue to exercise throughout eternity a holy happy influence on all worlds and races of rational and accountable beings already brought, or yet to be brought, into existence; and all ranks of a holy and redeemed creation, bound together in love and confirmed in bliss by it, shall gather themselves around the throne of God and of the Lamb, and celebrate in rapturous unison its wonder, power, and love: **WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER AND RICHES AND WISDOM AND STRENGTH AND GLORY AND HOÑOUR AND BLESSING. BLESSING AND HONOUR AND GLORY AND POWER BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB, FOR EVER AND EVER.**

III.

CHRIST EXALTED.

This topic furnishes a theme in some respects the grandest, the most comprehensive, and the most attractive, of all the parts of the Catholic opinion concerning Jesus Christ. It invites us to the consideration of the resurrection, ascension, and mediatorial glory of Christ, his kingly office and power, the complete redemption of his people, and the full and final consummation of the divine counsel in regard to the mediatorial economy in the future judgment and heavenly state. The very grandeur of the topic, however, renders it unmanageable by us. Scripture also unfolds it only in faint and shadowy outline; and I do not therefore propose to enter on it.

I announce it simply with the view of pointing out the particular aspect in which it is presented in the text,

and indicating the subjects to which the consideration of the text would lead. And first, the text evidently exhibits the exaltation of Christ as the *reward* of his atoning death, and the *proof* of God's approbation of his whole mediatorial work on earth: "*Wherefore* (*i.e.*, *because* he had so humbled himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross) God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Sometimes in Scripture this exalted place and name are represented as belonging to Christ "by inheritance," *i.e.*, by natural right—by eternal possession: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they,"¹—a representation, we may remark, which can be harmonized with the text, and even with itself, only on the supposition of the truth of the Catholic doctrine in regard to him. He could have a *right* to this name only as God; and it could be given him as a *reward* only as man, and as having performed a work in human nature with which God the Father was well pleased.

Again, the text proclaims the authority and power of Christ in his exalted condition, the dignity of his position, and the unrivalled glory of his name. That name is "Head over all things—Lord of all;" for it is "above every name," and it has been given him "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things (*i.e.*, intelligent creatures) in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."—On the supposition that "things (or beings) under the earth" means fallen angels and lost men, we have here three different worlds (heaven, earth, and hell) over which Christ as man and mediator has been exalted, and over the inhabitants of

¹ Heb. i. 4; Col. i. 15, 16: See "Arian Opinion," pp. 137-141.

which he exercises his dominion—his kingly authority and power. This would naturally lead us to the contemplation of the different modes and ends of his administration in these three worlds, and the different epochs of the manifestation and acknowledgment of his dominion, especially on earth: themes involving many profound and intricate questions on which much difference of opinion still prevails among Christians. The reason is, they are spoken of in Scripture only in the language of metaphor; and “the mystery of God” is not yet “finished,” as it has been “made known to his servants the prophets.” Time alone can solve many of these questions, and unfold to man upon earth, and perhaps even to saints and angels in heaven, a complete, and connected, and perfectly satisfactory view of the great drama of the mediatorial reign of Christ—the work of “Christ exalted.”

But, finally, the end—the great ultimate object and design of this exaltation of Christ—is certain: it is “to (in order to) the glory of God the Father.” The end of the exaltation of Christ is the same as that for which he was in eternity constituted mediator, and which he has had in view in all his proceedings in time, namely, the glory of God—a Three One God, represented by the Father—in the salvation of “a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues,” of mankind; and in the re-establishment of the holy happy government of God, which sin had deranged, over all orders of his rational offspring. This would naturally lead us therefore to speak of that work of “Christ exalted” which we have called *redemption*, or the application of redemption,—the work of grace and salvation, by which he is now bringing sinners to himself, justifying, sanctifying, and saving them, —working by his word and Spirit all his works in them,

that he may prepare them for, and bring them to, the participation of his glory. It would lead us to contemplate the result, when he shall "present his church to himself, a glorious church"—completely redeemed and sanctified—"not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish;" and then the grand and eternal consummation of his mediatorial labours and of the Divine counsel, when having "delivered up (or brought back) the kingdom to God, even the Father; and having put down all rule and authority and power;" he shall "dwell among his people," and (subject to the Father) reign over them for ever, "AND GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL."

In conclusion : I can now only, for practical purposes, recommend the subjects of this discourse to your daily remembrance and meditation and faith. The *incarnation* of Christ, the *cross* of Christ, the *exaltation* of Christ, are the very basis of Christianity and of all religious truth and hope. The first, the *incarnation* of Christ, brought down heaven to earth, and revealed invisible and divine things to men as no other event could have done. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "For this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world, that he might bear witness to the truth." There is no *certain* religious truth in the world which does not rest upon this foundation.—The second, again, the *cross* of Christ, reconciles and unites heaven and earth. It bridges the vast, dark, horrible abyss, the work of sin, that yawns between them, and opens up for men a "new and living way into the holiest of all." It rends the vail and lets down the light of heaven upon the darkness of earth. It guides bewildered reason through the mysteries of time. It is the fountain of light and life and love and glory to a dead and perish-

ing world. Never forget the cross of Christ ; never turn away from it ; never cease to gaze on it and glory in it. It is "the power of God and the wisdom of God."—In the third, the *exaltation* of Christ, lies the permanent source of attraction and intercourse between heaven and earth. When Christ *descended*, he clothed himself with our flesh that he might become one with us in our misery ; when he *ascended*, he gave to us his Spirit that we might be one with him in his joy and glory : and now, to all who have that Spirit, Christ exalted is a crown of rejoicing. They rejoice in him because he, in their nature—he, their beloved and friend, is now the blessed, glorious head of the created universe ; and they rejoice, also, because he is thus "head over all things *for his body's sake the church*," and because he has promised that "where he is there his servants shall be," and that they "shall be like him, seeing him as he is." O Christians ! set your affections on Christ, and on "things above where he is at the right hand of God." Remember his last petition for you, when in his humbled estate on earth he anticipated his own glory, "Father I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." Enter into the spirit of that petition ; Christ is still presenting it at his Father's right hand—join with him in doing so ; and, remembering that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," see that ye be prepared for its fulfilment. Let the language of the saintly Owen be yours : "Blessed Jesus ! we can add nothing to thee, nothing to thy glory ; but it is a joy of heart to us that thou art *what thou art (where thou art)*,—that thou art so gloriously exalted at the right hand of God ; and we do long more fully and clearly to behold that glory, according to thy prayer and promise." And let your character and conversation fully corre-

spond with this language : " Let your conversation be in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." AMEN.

VII.

Jesus Christ

The Desire of all Nations.

COME then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase-since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.

COWPER.

Text.

Haggai ii. 6, 7—Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

Outline.

INTRODUCTION: The interpretation of the text—The sense in which Jesus Christ may be spoken of as THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

OBSERVATION I. All nations have desired light: and Jesus Christ is "the Light of the world."

II. All nations have desired a visible manifestation of God and Jesus Christ is "God manifest in the flesh."

III. All nations have desired an adequate atonement for sin: and Jesus Christ is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

IV. All nations have desired a prevailing intercessor with God: and Jesus Christ is our "advocate with the Father—able to save to the uttermost."

V. All nations have desired a righteous king: and Jesus Christ is the "King of righteousness and Prince of peace."

VI. All nations have desired a destroyer of death: and Jesus Christ "has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light."

VII. All nations have desired rest for the soul: and Jesus Christ says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

CONCLUSION—Three questions on this subject.

VII.

JESUS CHRIST

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

MANY commentators, both Jewish and Christian, have supposed that the expression in the text, "the Desire of all Nations," refers to the precious or desirable things of the Gentiles which were to be brought as offerings to the second temple of Jerusalem, the building of which is the subject of the context. More especially they have understood it as describing the silver and the gold spoken of in the next verse: "The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts."—To say the least, however, this affords a very poor and unsatisfactory interpretation of this prediction; for, not to notice the incongruity of supposing the Spirit of God to describe "such corruptible things as silver and gold" as the "Glory" with which "this latter house was to be filled," the prediction in this sense was never accomplished, at least in the degree specified: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts." The riches and external splendour of the second temple, instead of exceeding, always remained immeasurably inferior to those of the temple of Solomon: so that we must conclude the promised glory to be of another kind—a glory of which

that of Solomon's temple, considered even as the habitation of the visible symbol of the Deity, the Shekinah, was but the shadow or semblance. And what glory could this be but that of the real presence—the actual manifestation—of the incarnate God, in his own temple? The event predicted was—as the last of the prophets expressed it—“The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Considered as a prediction of Jesus Christ, indeed, the language of Haggai is vague and its construction peculiar. But the vagueness is sufficiently removed when we remember the other prophetic descriptions given of the Messiah; and the peculiarity is sufficiently accounted for when we keep in view the designedly obscure and enigmatical phraseology of all the prophecies concerning him: so that we cannot reasonably doubt that the prediction relates to “Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write”—“the Seed of Abraham in whom all nations were to be blessed—the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the peoples was to be—the Son of David whose dominion was to extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth,—the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of his people Israel.” And, though there are in the New Testament no express references to the language of the prediction as descriptive of Christ, there is a sufficiently distinct reference to the principal events predicted as characterising his age and the introduction of his kingdom: for says the Apostle in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, evidently quoting the language of Haggai, “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this

word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." And what indeed is the whole New Testament revelation but the account of the fulfilment of the concluding words of the prophecy : " And in this place will I give peace saith the Lord of Hosts ?"

But in what sense could Christ be properly described as " The Desire of all nations ?" It could not be that all nations from the beginning or even all nations in the days of Haggai had heard of him and desired him. This might be the case at the latter of these periods (the period of the Jews' return from Babylon) with a few individuals of some of the nations. But how few were they ! and how few of the nations, comparatively, have even yet heard of his name !—while, by those which have heard of him, O how little has he been desired or loved ! In reference to both Jews and Gentiles the complaint of Isaiah is still appropriate and true, " Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

The designation, I apprehend, is to be regarded as pointing to Christ, considered not merely in his person, but in his office and work and kingdom, or in the elements of his complete and eternal salvation ; and these are described as meeting all the great wants and aspirations—supplying the *desiderata*—of all nations. All that the nations have been desiring and vainly seeking elsewhere, is to be found in Jesus Christ ; and when

they come to know him, and believe in him, they will find him to be—what all who have hitherto believed on him have found him—“*all their salvation and all their desire.*”—Let us meditate for a little on some of the principal things that the nations have desired, and which Jesus Christ is, or has to bestow :—

I.

All nations have desired light from heaven—a revelation from God :

And Jesus Christ is the true Light—“The Light of the World.”

To enter into any formal proof that all nations have desired light from heaven, or an authoritative revelation from God, would be a work of supererogation ; for the truth is sufficiently evident from the exigencies of natural reason. So long as man retains any suitable ideas of a Divine Being and of his own relations to that Being, he cannot but desire a clear and authoritative revelation of Him ; and this desire can only be increased, not satisfied, the more he attempts to derive the knowledge of God from the dark and doubtful and confused oracles of Nature and natural reason. Accordingly the most renowned of heathen sages have not been ashamed to express this desire. “To me,”—says Socrates to Alcibiades, in a remarkable passage often cited on this subject—“it seems best to be quiet ; it is necessary to wait till you learn how you ought to behave towards the gods and towards men. And when,” exclaims Alcibiades, “when O Socrates ! shall that time be, and who shall instruct me ? For most willingly would I see the man who he is.” To which Socrates replies : “He is one who cares for you ; but as Homer represents Minerva as taking away darkness from the eyes of Diomedes, that he might distinguish a god from a man, so it is necessary that he should first take away darkness from your mind, and then bring near those

things by which you shall know good and evil." This remarkable passage seems as if Socrates, or rather Plato, in whose works it appears, had not only formed some dim conception of the person and office of Christ, but also realised the necessity of divine influence to purify and enlighten the human understanding and prepare the soul for the reception of divine truth.

The same desire for light from heaven is still more impressively attested by many facts. The sacred books, for instance, which almost all heathen nations possessed, were believed by them to have come from the gods. The poets, when they detailed and beautified the traditionary legends of their deities, were regarded as inspired. Magistrates, when they prescribed national systems of religion, professed to have received these systems directly from heaven. And, above all, the belief in oracles, and the various modes of divination practised among all heathen nations, incontestibly demonstrate this desire for light. What were the famous oracles at Delphi and Dodona and other places—whether real or pretended—whether truly the abodes of preternatural influence, or mere impostures,—but indications of the desire of the nations which believed in and consulted them for light from heaven? and instances, also, of wicked spirits or wicked men being permitted to use or abuse this natural desire for their own wicked ends? And what, too, were the pretentious arts of the astrologer, the augur, the necromancer, and the sorcerer, but either impostures founded on the same prevailing desire, or attempts to draw from Nature otherwise than by the legitimate process of reasoning some of her deep secrets,—a putting her, so to speak, upon the rack, and endeavouring, by a species of torture, to force from her that intelligence from the unseen world which she

would not yield to gentler inquisition. The astrologer questioned

“The stars, which are the poetry of heaven,
If in their bright leaves might be read the fates
Of men and empires.”

The augur consulted the clouds, the thunders and lightnings which they sent forth, and the flights and sounds of birds, as the tokens and voices of the gods. The necromancer pretended to have intercourse with the dead,—and the sorcerer, that

“He could call spirits from the vasty deep,”—

to supply that light—that knowledge of the invisible and the future which poor human nature so urgently desired, but which the nations “sitting in darkness and the shadow of death” knew not how, otherwise, to obtain. So prevalent were these usages and arts among all ancient nations that even the Jews, in their idolatrous tendencies, seem to have been often led into them,—giving occasion to frequent protests and rebukes on the part of their prophets, such as that of Isaiah: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them which have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”¹

Now I need not tell an assembly of Christians that Jesus Christ and he alone meets and satisfies this desire of the nations. How he does so has already been shown in former discourses, and will be farther shown in this discourse; for all the remarks which I have to make come logically under this first observation, and relate to the various ways in which Jesus Christ is the light of

¹ Isa. viii. 19, 20.

the world. He is so in his person and work as well as by his revelation. As darkness is in Scripture the figure not only for ignorance, but also for sin and misery and all the evil brought into the world by Satan, so light is the figure not only for knowledge—true knowledge—but also for holiness and happiness, and all good: and is not Jesus Christ the only source of these to this fallen world? He is its “Light and Salvation.” He is the “Sun of righteousness” that has arisen upon it with life and “healing in his wings.” He could say “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”¹—True, Jesus Christ has been long come to—long known in—the world, and yet the greater part of it sits in darkness. Nay, his coming has in many cases acted as a judgment, “that they who saw not might see, and that they who saw might be made blind.”² It has tended to make the world’s darkness more visible, revealing that deepest shade of man’s inconsistency and depravity and misery, that he “loves the darkness rather than the light, because his deeds are evil.” But this does not render Jesus Christ less the “true Light” and the “Desire of all nations;” for not the less is he all that the nations need, and have been vainly seeking elsewhere; not the less has he enlightened with the “light of life” all who have “followed,” i.e. believed in him; and not the less certain is it that God has given him “for a light to lighten the Gentiles, that he may be His salvation unto the end of the earth.”

“Thus saith the Lord, Thee have I rais’d,
My prophet thee install;
In right I’ve raised thee, and in strength
I’ll succour whom I call.

¹ John viii. 12.

² John ix. 39.

" I will establish with the lands
A covenant in thee,
To give the Gentile nations light,
And set the prisoners free."

II.

All nations have desired a visible manifestation of God; And Jesus Christ is " God manifest in flesh"—" the image of the invisible God"—" the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person."

To prove that all nations have desired a visible manifestation of God—a visible God, it is only necessary to remark that the idea of such a manifestation was quite common among the heathen; and that their legends about the frequent appearances of their deities on earth indicate how earnestly they desired that this idea might be realized. At Lystra, Barnabas and Paul were mistaken for Jupiter and Mercury, and the people would have " done sacrifice to them," saying " The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men."¹ At Melita, " the barbarous people," when they saw no harm come to Paul from the viper that fastened on his hand, said " that he was a god."² These are specimens of the mode of thinking among the heathen—" both Greeks and Barbarians;" and do not all the systems of heathen idolatry seem to indicate not merely that this mode of thinking, and this desire, have been universal, but also that the desire is in some measure natural, and a visible manifestation of God less or more necessary to the well-being of man. Man's nature seems to crave—his necessities to demand—" his very heart and flesh to cry out" (as if in remembrance of Eden) for a personal, conversible, *visible* manifestation of the living God. Whether it be owing entirely

Acts xiv. 8-18.

² Acts xxviii. 1-6.

to the darkness that has come upon him through sin, or partly to the original constitution of his nature, certain it is that an invisible God is now too much of an "unknown God" to supply all man's wants, to satisfy all his aspirations, and to be the object of completely satisfactory love, and fellowship, and worship. He feels somewhat like the child who has never seen or known his own father,—a fatherless outcast untought by nature to cherish the thoughts and feelings, the hopes and joys of a child, or to cultivate the filial spirit that cries "Abba, father."

And what then, in this view, may all the systems of heathen idolatry be considered but, partly at least, the result of the aspirations of darkened and depraved humanity after a visible Father and God? We are not to forget, indeed, that the true God was once known to man, and that he has never left himself without a witness in any nation; "for the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and glory; so that they are without excuse; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."¹ But admitting this to be the true moral root of all idolatry, may we not see also in its history another and an original principle of human nature at work, and so describe that history as man's fruitless search after a lost father—after a visible God?

As Abraham is fabled to have done, before he knew

¹ Rom. i. 20-23.

God,—before “the God of glory appeared to him in Mesopotamia,” so human nature has done. It has lifted up its eyes to the sun and moon and stars, “walking in their brightness,” and sighed, ‘O that I had a God as visible and beautiful and glorious as these!’ It has thought of the heroes of antiquity—“the men of old which were men of renown”—and said, ‘O that I had gods as personal, as comprehensible, as conversible as they!’ Nay, it has turned to the beasts of the field, to the birds of the air, to the creeping things of the earth, and even to the trees and plants—to everything that had life, or beauty, or utility—and said, ‘O that I had intelligent objects of love and worship, as visible and tangible even as these!’ But poor, outcast, fatherless humanity—in its enmity to the true God, and its aspirations after a visible God—found none with which it could be satisfied; and, in its folly and despair, it sunk therefore to the lowest depth of moral degradation—making visible gods to itself, and in and through these worshipping its only spiritual god and father the Devil. Here its two great appetencies—the natural and the moral—the desire for a visible god, and the desire for a god suiting its corruption—may be said to have met; and here therefore the search of man after a lost God terminated. Having thus brutified them and shut them up in his dungeon, the “Strong One armed,” who has enslaved them, keepeth his palace, and his captives are “in peace.” But O! how degrading the captivity! how dreadful the peace!

In what way Christ is able to satisfy this longing of man after a visible God, and so bring him back to the love and worship of the only living and true God, requires little explanation or illustration. He satisfied it in part, even before his incarnation, by his visible appearances to the patriarchs and prophets in human or

angelic form; but now he has met and satisfied it fully, by his manifestation in the flesh. Now he is "IMMANUEL, *God with us*,"—a visible God, the God-man—a true man, yet enshrining in the temple of his human nature all the power and glory of the eternal Divinity; for, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "He is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person."¹ More than this, Jesus Christ is not only "God manifest in flesh," but God revealed in the most attractive, the most amiable, the most lovely form and character which it was possible even for the Deity to assume,—so as to have in him not only what is fitted to satisfy the original desire of human nature, of which we have spoken, but what is sufficient also, through the Spirit, to subdue and correct the moral, and bring man back to the remembrance and love and worship of the one living and true God. Along with the glories of divinity, all the beauties of humanity were seen in him. He was "full of grace and truth;" and the soul that knows him can not only adore him as its "Lord and God," but joy and glory in him as its "beloved and friend"—"white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand, yea, altogether lovely."

True, Jesus Christ has again withdrawn himself, and is no more personally visible to men upon earth. But it is only for a time. He has also left behind him in his word a full-length portrait of himself, and in his Church many precious memorials and love tokens. He causes an image—a *photograph*—of himself to be drawn by his Spirit on every believing heart. He dwells in his people by faith. He converses with them, and in various ways "manifests himself to them." And,

¹ Col. 1. 15; II. 9; Heb. 1. 3.

above all, soon they know they shall be with him where he is, "beholding his glory and being like him; for they shall see him as he is." They are abundantly satisfied, and would not give up their hopes in Christ for all that earth or heaven contains besides *him*, or for all that earth or hell can do against *them*. "Whom have we in heaven," they can say, "but thee? and there is none upon earth that we desire besides thee:" "whom having not seen we love, in whom though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls."¹ O that Christ crucified and exalted would speedily manifest himself thus to all nations!

III.

All nations have desired an adequate atonement for sin: And Jesus Christ is the divinely provided "propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

By an *adequate* atonement is meant one that in all cases is able to give peace to the conscience of the sinner, when he believes and rests in it as a ground or means of reconciliation with God. Now, that all nations have felt, less or more distinctly, the need of such an atonement, and have desired it, is sufficiently proved by their sacrificial systems. For, as plainly as the idols of the nations indicate their desire of a visible God, their costly offerings to these idols, and the horrid cruelties of their sacrificial systems indicate (whatever Socinians and infidels may say to the contrary) that they have felt their need of a sacrifice—a great sacrifice—to pacify the conscience and reconcile them to God. Accordingly, as some commentators interpret it, the language of the prophet is considered the expression of

¹ Pa. lxxiii. 25; 1 Pet. i. 8, 9.

heathen anxiety and desire on this subject: "Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"¹

And this language is only too appropriate: for what means and sacrifices have not the nations tried for this end? They have tried Cain's offering—"the fruit of the ground"—as well as silver and gold and all costly and precious things; but they found no satisfaction in these. Nature itself told them that the soul cannot be redeemed with such "corruptible things as silver and gold"—that an angry God will not regard riches or gifts—"no, not gold nor all the forces of strength." They have tried Abel's offering—"the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof;" but, not having Abel's faith, they felt *them* equally incompetent to pacify the conscience or purify the heart: "Lebanon was not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering;" "thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil" left the soul as conscious of guilt, as estranged from God, and as distrustful before him as ever. They betook themselves to Abraham's offering. As if Deity had been a cruel and sanguinary demon they began to sacrifice human victims—they sought to please him by embruising their hands in the blood of captives and slaves, of relatives and friends, of parents and children; "they offered their first-born for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul." But ah! that sin remained; and they knew none of "the blessedness of him whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is

¹ Mic. vi. 6, 7.

covered." They have sometimes added to these bodily penances and privations,—painful self-lacerations, and other cruel ceremonies,—but the evil conscience could not be thus either chastened or charmed away. The nations remained in doubt and darkness on the subject, labouring yet unsatisfied; and the cry was as loud and earnest as before, "Wherewith shall we come before the Lord, and bow ourselves before the most high God?" No answer to the question could be obtained from nature or philosophy or tradition; and poor Man—sin-burdened, self-tormented, and devil-oppressed Man—knowing of no adequate atonement for sin, lived without God and died without hope.

To answer this all-important question was the primary purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God; and he answered it "by the sacrifice of himself." By this he hath put away sin; by this he hath reconciled a guilty world to God; by it "he hath obtained eternal redemption"—"brought in an everlasting righteousness," on the ground of which any man, or every man—of any nation, or of all nations—may approach to God and be accepted of him. Now the message has gone forth and is commanded to be preached to "every creature" that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself not imputing their trespasses unto them; for he hath made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life." O what a wondrous and glorious solution of the great question of the nations—"Wherewith shall we come before the Lord!" They have now only to hear and believe this joyful message, when their consciences are pacified, their hearts purified, their souls saved; and, coming to

God as well pleased in Christ, they "walk in the light of his countenance; in his name they rejoice all the day; and in his righteousness they are exalted." "They are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God." "They are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."¹—It is a sad reflection, however, that this glorious gospel of the blessed God has been as yet proclaimed to so few of the nations, and that those who hear it are so slow to listen, and understand, and believe; but the promise is still true, and the time of its fulfilment, we hope, drawing nigh: "In him shall the Gentiles trust. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him, and all nations call him blessed."²

IV.

All nations have desired a prevailing intercessor with God: And "Jesus Christ the righteous is our advocate with the Father—able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The universality of the office of priesthood among the nations of mankind is sufficient evidence of their desire for a prevailing intercessor; for a priest is one who not merely offers sacrifice to God, but also on the

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19, 21; John iii. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 15, 16; Eph. ii. 19; Heb. xii. 22-24.

² Isa. xi. 10; Rom. xv. 10; Ps. lxxli. 17.

ground of sacrifice conducts all the business of men with God, and of God with men. He is the messenger of God to men, and the advocate with God for men. He brings them near to God, and pleads for them; he pronounces God's blessing on them, and instructs them in His will. He is "a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man His uprightness; that God may be gracious to him and say, Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."¹

How universal has this office of priesthood been! How ready have all nations been to listen to the pretences of any one who could in any way persuade them that he had power or interest with God! From the days of Melchisedek, "the priest of the Most High God," the first intercessor we read of in Scripture, to the present hour, we have heard of no nation or tribe or family of mankind, savage or civilized, which had not, under one name or other, a priesthood. The Magi of Assyria, and Babylon, and Persia,—the hierophants of Egypt—the priests and augurs of Greece and Rome—the Druids of the North and rainmakers of the South—the Brahmins and bonzes of the East, and the soothsayers and sorcerers of the West,—what have all these been but pretended intercessors with God? showing how universally the desire of which we speak has prevailed among the nations, and how universally also cunning and self-seeking men have been ready to make merchandise of this desire—allying themselves with the principalities and powers of darkness, or with the despots of the earth, or with both, and crushing poor human nature under the load of superstition and priestcraft. Alas! how dark and dismal a history has that of human priesthood been!

¹ Job xxxiii. 23, 24.

And all that history has had its root in this universal desire—this unutterable longing of human nature for a “daysman,” a mediator, “betwixt God and man, who might lay his hand upon them both,” and bring them together in peace.¹

Now “Jesus Christ the righteous,” and he alone, is such a daysman; he is the “one mediator between God and man.” There never was or will be any other *true* mediator, or intercessor, or priest, than he. Even Melchisedek and the priests of the house of Aaron, though divinely called to the office and work assigned them, were but types and figures of this one, true, everlasting priest. As their sacrifices were typical of his, so their intercession or priesthood was founded on his, and prefigured it. That of Melchisedek prefigured its *universality* in respect of the nations of mankind; that of Aaron prefigured its *specialty* in respect of the church of God. Like the one, Christ is a priest for all nations; like the other, he is “an high priest over the house of God.” Like the one, he stands alone as a priest, “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life;” like the other, he is the head of “that chosen generation, that royal priesthood, that holy nation, that peculiar people” whom he redeems and “calls out of darkness into his marvellous light,” and makes “kings and priests unto God his Father.” Like the one, we may perhaps add, he is a royal priest, the mysterious representative of God to men, and the medium of all spiritual blessings; like the other, he is “taken from among men (his brethren) and ordained in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin,” richly endowed with all human sympathies, “who can have compassion

¹ Job ix. 32, 33.

on the ignorant and on them who are out of the way."—But it is unnecessary to dwell on these and other qualifications and excellencies of this great high priest, or on his work. He is and has all that the guilty nations of mankind need, or can desire, in an intercessor. His merit is unquestionable, his power with God unbounded, his sympathy with man undoubted, his priesthood everlasting and unchangeable: for "this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." O that all the nations but knew of him and believed in him! Every one who trusts in him is at once relieved from the galling yoke of priesthood; the heavy burden of superstitious fear falls from his shoulders, and "free indeed" he walks with God and reigns with Christ upon the earth. He enjoys immediate access to a reconciled Father on His throne of grace, and can use all necessary freedom of speech in His presence. He can ask what he will, in the name of his great high priest, with the assurance that, if good for him, he shall obtain it. And even when sin again overtakes and casts him down, it cannot destroy his safety or permanently darken his conscience or disturb his peace; for "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world;" and he has only to confess his sin, when "He who is faithful and just will," for Christ's sake, "forgive him his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness;" he will "obtain mercy and find grace to help him in time of need."—Verily, "such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."¹

¹ Heb. iv. 14-16; vii. 24-26; 1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.

V.

All nations have desired a righteous King or government :
And Jesus Christ is the King of righteousness and "Prince
of peace, of the increase of whose government and peace
there shall be no end."

Turning our eyes for a little from the religious to the political history of the nations, and endeavouring to read aright the story of their governments and laws, their wars and conquests, their revolutions and anarchies, what may we learn from that story but that all nations have felt the necessity, and cherished the earnest desire, of a righteous government or king, in order to the peace and well-being of man? From the days of Nimrod, when civil government seems to have been first established, to the last tempest of revolutionary war which swept over Europe, the permanent results of which are not even yet fully apparent, what has all the political history of the nations been but a painful and unavailing effort, or succession of efforts, to lay the foundation of a government which would secure at once, tranquillity and safety, liberty and order, righteousness and peace? And O what a diversified, what a dark, what a bloody history, beyond all language to describe, this has been! What plans have not been tried, what absurdities have not been trusted in, what crimes have not been perpetrated, and what miseries have not been endured, in the forlorn hope of at last establishing the principles, and working out the conditions of a suitable government for human society? Monarchies, oligarchies, democracies, and even counterfeit theocracies, have followed and replaced each other in endless succession. Despotism has paved the way for republicanism, and republicanism for despotism. Tyranny has come in upon the shoulders of anarchy, and anarchy has trodden upon the heels of tyranny. Draconic law has been resorted to as a cure

for original socialism, and artificial and atheistic socialism has been again proposed as a remedy for Draconic law. In the meantime every change, or effort at change, has only extended the reign of Death, turning this fair world, prepared and furnished by the God of love and peace as a suitable nursery for his rational and immortal offspring, into one wide Aceldama—a great field of mutual slaughter. How sad the reflection! It would be difficult indeed to say whether it has been in the religious or the political history of the nations that the dominion of the Devil over them has been more perspicuously and terribly demonstrated. From both, the conclusion seems unavoidable that “the whole world”—the great mass of mankind—yet “lieth,” as it has long lain, “in the Wicked One,”—that “the kingdom of this world” is but another phrase for the dominion of the Devil, and that he is too truly described when he is styled in Scripture both “the God,” and “the Prince, of this world.”

But is there then no righteous king or government for man? Are the desires and hopes of the nations, in this matter, to be for ever frustrated?—“BEHOLD, A KING SHALL REIGN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND PRINCES SHALL RULE IN JUDGMENT! AND A MAN SHALL BE AS AN HIDING PLACE FROM THE WIND, AND A COVERT FROM THE TEMPEST; AS RIVERS OF WATER IN A DRY PLACE; AND AS THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK IN A WEARY LAND. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice even for

ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”¹—Such is the king whom God has provided for the nations of mankind, and recommended to their choice. He has already set him on His holy hill of Zion, and summoned all nations—all men, to submit to his sceptre and swear fealty to him. And what are the predicted characters and fruits of his reign?—“The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, *and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*”² Ah! what a different kind of king this, from any that the nations of the earth have ever yet seen! “The best of *them* is as a brier, the most upright sharper than a thorn hedge!” For how ready are the very best of them to shed the blood of their subjects in their unjust or unnecessary wars! But of this king it is said, “Precious shall the blood even of the poor and needy be in his sight.” He shall be their friend and brother as well as their king—their meek and lowly and sympathizing comforter as well as their sovereign. He is his people’s champion, and has already shed his own blood for them that he might spare theirs. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,

¹ Isa. xxxii. 1, 2; ix. 6, 7.

² Ps. lxxii. 3, 4, 7, 8, 13, 14.

and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."¹

These are a specimen of the glowing descriptions which prophecy gives of the character of Messiah's government, the extent of his dominion, and the fruits of his just and peaceful reign. To cite more is unnecessary.—But it may be objected here, 'This king is already come; this kingdom has already been established on earth; and where is the fulfilment of these fine promises? Christianity has as yet wrought little or no deliverance on earth. It has been more productive of oppression and wrong than of righteousness and peace. The Christian Church instead of a peacemaker among the nations, has been a firebrand—a stirrer up of "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies." She has, more than any other one cause, been the source of war and bloodshed among the nations of Christendom, and even, sometimes, among those of Heathendom. And where then is the evidence that these prophetic pictures of the reign of righteousness and peace shall ever be realised?'—I answer that it is not the design of this discourse to account for the abuses of Christianity, or for the apparent delay that has taken place in the evangelization and conversion of the world to Christ. It is enough to say, that we distinguish between the so-called Christian church and the kingdom of Christ, and between the history of the one and the fruits of the other. The work of evangelizing the nations is a great one and requires time; and that work, also, has been so far put into the hand of

¹ Zech. ix. 9-11.

man, and therefore suffers interruption and delay: man's indolence and unfaithfulness go far to account for all the delay that has yet taken place. This work, too, has had great and manifold opposition to encounter both from earth and hell; and, besides that God may have many wise and good reasons for permitting it, this delay will doubtless, in the end, render the result all the more permanent and glorious. It is not for us to know the times and seasons of the divine purposes, or to see beforehand the whole course of divine providence. "God's way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, his footsteps are not known. Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." It is enough for us to see that unspotted righteousness is the very basis of Messiah's throne, and that wherever his law is obeyed, peace—perfect peace—is the result. It is enough for us to know that, however unexpected to short-sighted man, the delay that has taken place in the spread and triumph of the gospel of peace was not unforeseen of God. And it is enough for us therefore to be assured that the promises yet remain true and faithful—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee: for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is governor among the nations. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign to the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."¹

Meanwhile let us, for our own good, remember that

¹ Ps. ii. 8; xxii. 27, 28; Isa. xl. 9, 10.

Messiah's kingdom is not of this world : it is a spiritual kingdom ; men enter into it, not as nations, but as individuals ; they do so by receiving and obeying the truth ; and he who enters enjoys peace—"the peace of God, that passeth all understanding," though all around him be in commotion and strife. "The heathen may rage, the kingdoms may be moved, God may utter his voice, and the earth may melt ; but the Lord of hosts is with *him* ; the God of Jacob is *his* refuge. This God is *his* God for ever and ever ; and he will be *his* guide even unto death."¹

VI.

All nations have desired a destroyer of Death :

And "our Saviour Jesus Christ has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.

Of the sentiments of all nations in regard to death, little requires to be said. Our own consciousness must sufficiently convince us that to every possessor of our common nature, so long as he remains ignorant of him who is "the Resurrection and the Life," Death is, in ordinary circumstances, the most formidable and forbidding of all enemies—"the king of terrors." Many facts also support and illustrate this truth ; such as, that among all nations the infliction of death has been the heaviest punishment which human law prescribed,—that all nations have earnestly sought after the means of prolonging life,—and that to all, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul—a deathless existence of some kind in another world—has been the subject of fondly cherished hope, or of earnest and unceasing speculation. Nay even when the Epicurean sceptic, whose views are necessarily confined within the horizon of the present world, glories in the thought of the immortality of his

¹ Ps. xlv. 6, 7 ; xlviii. 14.

name, what is it but a half-formed desire—a sigh, for a destroyer of death,—the more sad that it is so imperfect, and yet so gloried in?¹ I only add that we may easily conceive what a jubilee for the whole world that day would be on which a proclamation, in all living languages, was heard from heaven—“THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH.” O how would the hearts of the nations expand! And what a shout of triumph, “like the sound of many waters, and of mighty thunderings,” would roll round the earth, and rise to heaven!

But alas! among the nations destitute of divine revelation, such a proclamation was never heard; nor had they any knowledge of a destroyer, or of a prospective destruction of death. “Such knowledge was too wonderful for them; it was high, they could not attain unto it.” Even the wisest and most intelligent of them appear to have had no settled or satisfactory convictions in regard to the immortality of the soul. Socrates himself is said to have died in doubt about it. And as to a resurrection of the body—as to the hope of the complete abolition of death—their loftiest speculations never approached it. They had lost the knowledge of him who was “to bruise the head of the serpent and destroy his works;” and besides him there is no destroyer of death. He alone is “the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Him, even when he is dead, still lives; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die.” “He is the living one, who was dead, and behold He is alive again for evermore, Amen; and has the keys of hell and of death.” “Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.”²—In this respect

¹ “Non omnis moriar: multaque pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam.”—HOR.

² John xi. 25, 26; Rev. i. 18; 2 Tim. i. 10.

too, then, Jesus Christ may well be described as "the Desire of all nations;" and O that they all knew him and believed in him in this as well as the other aspects of his salvation! For such a knowledge and faith would be equivalent in its joyful results to the proclamation we have supposed. And they shall yet know him and believe in him thus: "For in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering (or *face-covering*, i.e. the sentence of death) cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it."¹

VII.

All nations have desired rest for their souls:

And Jesus Christ says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

As our first remark was designed to look forward and anticipate all that were to follow, so this, our last remark, looks back and recapitulates all that go before. For what is *rest*—*rest to the soul*? It is an epitome of all good—all that can fill and satisfy the heart of man. It is not mere quiescence or inactivity; for then death would be an object of desire rather than of terror, for it brings, or seems to bring, this. It is not merely the absence of trouble and sorrow, of toil and annoyance; for then also the grave would appear to secure it. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary

¹ Isa. xxv. 6-8.

are at rest." Man in order to be happy must have employment and activity as well as repose; and the true rest of his soul, therefore, supposes a suitable combination of these, and lies in the possession and enjoyment of all he feels or knows or deems to be good for him. In order to it there must be both the presence of all known good and the absence of all evil,—both the present enjoyment and the endless prospect of all that he esteems necessary to his well-being; in a word, happiness unmingled and unending, according to the capacities and desires of his rational and immortal nature,—all that Scripture labours to express in the pregnant words, "glory, honour, immortality—eternal life."

All nations, during all ages, have been sighing for this rest—this perfect happiness—and earnestly seeking it. It is an essential feature of man's nature to desire it, and he cannot cease to labour for its acquisition. All nations have been seeking it in different ways; but they have never yet found it out of Christ. Perhaps no two nations or generations of men—nay, no two individuals ignorant of Christ—ever sought the rest of the soul precisely in the same way. And O what a countless multitude of plans must now have been tried! Surely all possible, all conceivable methods of securing rest must by this time have been attempted! And with what result? The believer in divine revelation can confidently answer, "Vanity and vexation of spirit." Rest for the soul of man cannot be found, for it is not possible, out of God—away from God; and in order to be found by him in God, he must seek it through Jesus Christ. "GOD IS THE END; CHRIST IS THE WAY." God is the portion, Christ the physician and guide, the instructor and surety, of the human soul, in seeking rest: and wherever, or however else that rest may be sought, the end will and must be disappointment and

sorrow and shame. O that all who have the opportunity and means would but believe this and come to Christ, and to God through him, that they might have this rest! that they would "take his yoke upon them and learn of him, that they might find rest to their souls! for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light:" and then, when they have found rest for themselves, that they would hasten to convey the knowledge of it, and the means of finding it, to all nations! for the invitation is for all—for the universal family of man—"COME UNTO ME AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

The Son of God "came and died and rose and revived" that he might convey this invitation to the human race, and that he might secure the end in view to all who shall ever hear and obey it. He came to reveal God, and reconcile the world to Him, that the labouring, restless soul of man might be brought back to Him. He came to remove its guilt, to enlighten its darkness, to eradicate its folly; he came to redeem it from the captivity of sin and Satan, to restore its strength, to renew its youth, and so enable it, guided by the Spirit, to find its way back to Him who is the source of its life and the sum of its enjoyment. He came to receive it again into the fellowship of God, and prepare it for His presence and glory, and then introduce it into the inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," prepared and reserved in heaven for it: an inheritance in which it shall be partner with Christ himself, and all his redeemed and holy creation, in the enjoyment of all that God has, and all that He is. For God Himself is the inheritance of the rational and holy soul; it is an "heir of God and joint heir with Christ." This inheritance, this alone can ever give true and lasting rest to that wondrous existence, the human soul, which, as it has the capacity for enjoying

God, must necessarily remain restless and unsatisfied with anything less, or anything else. In order to be happy, it must be "filled with all the fulness of God." O blessed, blessed they who have attained, or begun to attain, or but begun in the right way to seek, this rest of the soul! Whatever be their condition now—however poor, and afflicted, and despised, and sorrowful,—however oppressed and tempted here,—they shall one day be "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of God's house; and he will make them to drink of the river of his pleasure. For with him is the fountain of life: in his light they shall see light." "He will show them the path of life: in his presence there is fulness of joy: at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore."¹

In conclusion, it would be wise in the reader to ask himself the following questions as to Him who is "The Desire of all nations:"—*First*: Am I desiring him, and his salvation, for *myself*? It is quite possible, nay lamentably common, for gospel hearers and professing Christians to assent to all that can be said about Christ and his salvation, as desirable for others, and yet never once desire them for themselves. They read, and hear, and approve for others, not themselves. The reason is, they have never felt their own need of such a Saviour or salvation. They have not realised their own guilt or depravity,—their own destitution, and liability to eternal perdition. Some cunning, cherished self-delusion, the fruit of unbelief and sin, prevents them from doing so; and all personal concern—all self-application of the truth—is thus evaded. The arrows of conviction are repelled, and reflected from their mailed consciences towards their fellow-sinners; and thus Christ becomes little else to them than a root of bitter-

¹ Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9; xvi. 11.

ness in respect of others, and a reason of heavier condemnation to themselves. O Reader! beware of thus receiving the grace of God in vain, or turning it to a false and mischievous end—into a savour of death unto death.—*Secondly*: Have I embraced, or am I now embracing Christ and his salvation, for myself? And have I also experienced, in any degree, that excellence and sufficiency of his salvation which enable me to rejoice in him, and warrant me to commend him to others? Do I know from my own consciousness that he is indeed “the Desire of all nations?” Is he all *my* salvation and all *my* desire? Have I obtained *light* from him, even that knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, which is eternal life? Have I received the gift of his Spirit? and am I, through the aid of that Spirit, enjoying peace with God, cherishing confidence in God, obtaining access to God, and cultivating fellowship with God, on the ground of Christ’s everlasting atonement, and through faith in his all-prevalent intercession? Have I accepted him as my king? and am I wearing his yoke, and walking in his law? Do I look for victory over death through his death, and admission into his everlasting kingdom and fellowship and glory, solely and exclusively from his life, and love, and promise, and power?—O let us beware, Reader, of thinking Christianity a mere name, or profession, or creed, or cloak for the present! It is a reality. It is a new life. It is a blessed, purifying, saving hope now; and this hope has all its foundation in Christ, and all its objects in things above, where he is, at the right hand of God.—*Finally*: What am I doing to diffuse the knowledge of this glorious Saviour and great salvation over the earth? For if Christians believe what they profess, and know in any measure the blessedness of which they speak, surely unceasing and devoted ex-

ertion to make Christ known to all nations is the least that may be expected of them. It is impossible that they can be too zealous for this, if their zeal be intelligent and believing. For O what interests are at stake, and what responsibilities are involved! When we think of these, we may almost say that Paul himself was but a laggard in the "work of the Lord"—the work of preaching the gospel of Christ among the nations. Or, if he did what he could, he did no more than the cause required. If he was "beside himself" with zeal and fervour, his enthusiasm, or madness, so to call it, was the offspring of the loftiest reason, the associate of the soundest sobriety, and a spur to the plainest duty. And O! if he did not surpass—did not come up to—what the occasion required, What must be said of the generality of Christians and of the Christian Church now? After so long a time—with the field of the whole world open before her,—with means and appliances indefinitely increased, and agents as numerous as she pleases to summon and sustain,—with the promise still true, and the time of it plainly approaching,—and above all, with divine judgments shaking all nations, and proclaiming "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord,"—what must be thought of the Christian Church of the present day, if she do not speedily lay aside her indolence and earthliness and strifes, and gird herself for her own great work—the work for which she exists,—that of preaching the gospel to every creature? And what shall be thought of you Reader—what shall your Lord think of you, and what shall you be compelled to think of yourself—if you take no part in this divinely planned and divinely commanded crusade?

" Can we, whose souls are lighted
With Wisdom from on high,

260 JESUS CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny ?

Salvation ! Oh, Salvation !
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learn'd Messiah's name !

Till o'er our ransomed Nature
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign !

“Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city : for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust ; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem : loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”
“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !” “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God !”

“Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
THY WORD FULFILLED, THE CONQUEST OF A WORLD.”

“Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

Appendix.

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APPENDIX.

NOTE I. p. 52.

Whether the Jews believed in the power of demons to work miracles.

PALEY says that this belief of the Jews is "evidently recognised in the Jewish writings, as well as in ours." (Evid. of Christ. pt. iii. ch. 4.) By its being recognised in our writings he appears to allude to the record of the slander thrown out against Christ, by some of the "scribes from Jerusalem:" "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." (Matt. xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15). It is plain however that this is altogether insufficient to prove that any such belief prevailed; for, besides that the slander referred only to one class of miracles—the casting out of demons,—there can be little doubt that it was either a mere "railing accusation," or a hypocritical pretence, which can tell us nothing as to the general and settled conviction of the Jews upon the subject. Accordingly we do not find that this argument was ever brought against any other miracle of Jesus, or afterwards repeated even as to the casting out of devils: which it would most certainly have been, had it rested on a prevalent and settled Jewish belief. On the other hand, when some in Jerusalem brought a similar accusation against the doctrine of Christ—"He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye him?"—they were at once met, and apparently silenced, by the reply, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" (John x. 20,

21)—a reply which altogether discredits the allegation of Paley. It need hardly be added that the confession of Nicodemus and many other passages are also clearly opposed to it: "Rabbi we know that thou art a teacher come from God: *for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.*" (John iii. 2; ix. 16, 33; x. 37, 38; Acts iv. 16).—What Paley refers to when he says that this belief, about the power of demons, is "recognised in the Jewish writings," we do not know. Archbishop Whately in his discourse on "Jesus despised as a Nazarene" mentions a Jewish writing (Toldoth Jeschu) which he calls "a very ancient book" which ascribes the miracles of Jesus to "magical art." Besides, however, that magical art among the Jews (being supposed to lie in some imaginary use of the name of God) meant probably a different thing from what we commonly understand by the agency of demons, this book, "Toldoth Jeschu," so far from being "very ancient," is a "modern work, written in the 14th or 15th century, and is throughout, from beginning to end, burlesque and falsehood." (*Lard. Cred.* vol. vi. p. 558). It is altogether worthless then even as an index of the opinions of the Jews of the time of Christ.—Farmer, in his Treatise on Miracles, refers to this alleged belief of the Jews of the time of Christ, but strongly denies that it was, or could be, held by them (Ch. vi. 2).—So far as appears, then, there is no evidence that the belief in question prevailed, or even existed, among the Jews of the time of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to see how they could seriously entertain it, seeing its most direct and conclusive effect would have been the destruction of their faith in Moses and the prophets. Paley endeavours to ward off this objection by saying that "it had not entered into the minds of those who lived in the time of Moses and the prophets to ascribe *their* miracles to the supernatural agency of evil beings;" and that "it was not probable that the later Jews, brought up in reverence for the religion and polity already established, should apply to their history a reasoning which tended to overthrow the foundation of both." But this argument is equally good against

their *taking up* such a belief as, when applied to their established religion and polity, destroyed the foundation of both : especially since that belief had not even entered into the minds of their fathers. Paley says that "the Jews of that age had been from their infancy brought up" in this belief of the power of demons : and to what miracles, then, prior to those of Jesus, had they been accustomed to apply it, if not to those of Moses and the prophets ?—On the whole, besides being unsupported by evidence, Paley's allegation seems to be both untenable and unsafe.

NOTE II. p. 60.

On the character and conduct of Caiaphas.

The character of Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, and especially his conduct in connection with the death of Christ, seem to demand more full consideration than could be given within the prescribed limits of a discourse intended for the pulpit. The following remarks may not be uninteresting to thoughtful readers :

After his second passover, our blessed Lord does not appear to have visited Jerusalem for the long period of eighteen months. "He walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John vii. 1.) After this, his work in Galilee being now finished, and the time of his death approaching, he went up to the feast of Tabernacles, "not openly, but as it were in secret." As soon as he appeared in Jerusalem, an attempt was made by the Pharisees—at that time the predominating party in the supreme council, *the Sanhedrim*,—to apprehend him, and bring him before the council. (John vii. 32.) This attempt signally failed. "Why have ye not brought him ?" said the rulers to the officers : "Never man spake like this man," was the reply ; when the chagrined rulers broke forth into bitter and furious railing, and the council (assembled doubtless for the purpose of commencing a process against Jesus) separated, apparently, in confusion and strife. "His hour was not yet come."

At this time there was evidently "a division because of Jesus" not only "among the people" but also among the rulers. His bitter enemies, the Pharisees, were no doubt by far the most numerous and predominating party in the council; but, besides that a very few of their sect, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, were decidedly friendly to him in their hearts, there seems to have been a considerable number of them that "halted between two opinions,"—doubtful, time-serving Demases—who were sure in the end to side with the strongest party. (John vii. 50-52; ix. 16; xii. 42, 43.) This would embarrass the ruling party, and prevent their acting with decision in the case of Jesus. But this, I suspect, was not all their difficulty. The high priest, so far as appears, had not yet taken any part or any interest in this business. He was a Sadducee, and had, doubtless, all the members and influence of that sect completely under his control; and until, therefore, it should appear how he was disposed to act, the Pharisees, however bitter against Jesus, required to walk warily, lest they should afford some opportunity to their cunning enemies, the Sadducees, to obtain a triumph over them. (Comp. Acts iv. 6; v. 17; xxiii. 6.) For some time after this, accordingly, nothing was done by them, as rulers. They heard Jesus in the temple and elsewhere, questioned him, quarrelled with him, slandered him, and repeatedly attempted to stone him in a tumultuous and illegal manner; but they did nothing against him effectively in the council. (John vii. ix. x.) It was not till after the resurrection of Lazarus that their way was opened up. Some of the Pharisees themselves, or their creatures, were present at that stupendous miracle of Christ, and witnessed it. Immediately a council was called, and the question put "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." (John xi. 47, 48.)

From this language it is obvious that the Pharisees who used it, and the council generally that acted on it, not only believed in the reality of the "many miracles" of Jesus, but

were in their hearts and consciences convinced of his Messiahship. The reality of the danger which they apprehended from the Romans, in whatever way they expected that danger to arise, must have hinged on his being "the Christ, a King;" and the apprehension, therefore, argues the conviction. (See Lightfoot; Trench on Miracles, etc.) But not to dwell on this, what we wish particularly to notice is that this was an apprehension in which the sympathies of the Pharisee and the Sadducee would be at one. The previous quarrels of the Pharisees with Jesus would doubtless be held by the infidel or Epicurean Sadducee in supreme contempt. What cared *he* though Jesus did not keep the Sabbath? though his disciples did not fast, or wash their hands before meat, or observe any other of the trashy traditions of the fathers? Nay, what cared *he* though Jesus called himself the Son of God? or said that He existed before Abraham, and that He and the Father were one? It was small concern of *his* what Jesus might call himself, or what He might be. His materialistic creed was not touched, his worldly conscience would not be troubled, by such airy questions as these. But when the question came to be about the safety of "their place and nation;" when both the temple and the law—both 'church and state'—and all the temporal interests of the rulers, as connected with these, were 'in danger' from this prophet and miracle-worker,—then indeed the Sadducee would hear a call to action, and he would obey it. These were his gods, and if they were taken away what had he more? It was now, then, that Caiaphas and his Sadducees came to the rescue of their perplexed opponents, and in a very summary manner cut the knot of their perplexity. "Ye know nothing at all (said he, with a display of contempt for his scrupulous adversaries, the Pharisees, worthy of his own daring and unprincipled character), nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." (John xi. 49, 50.) This speech was probably deemed oracular;¹ and the proposal

¹ John describes the counsel of Caiaphas as *prophetic* or *oracular* when taken in a mystical sense,—resting, apparently, this account of it on the fact

it contained seems to have been carried by acclamation. Pharisee and Sadducee heartily concurred in it; the friends of Jesus, if any of them were present, suffered it to pass in silence; and "from that day forth," with one consent, the rulers "took counsel together to put him to death." (John xi. 53.)

And as Caiaphas had thus been the prime mover in the "counsel and deed"—the *decree*—in pursuance of which Messiah was to be "cut off, but not for himself," so he became the principal agent in its execution. We pass over an interval of several weeks or months, during the greater part of which Jesus kept himself out of the reach of the conspirators. It was now but two days before the passover—before the day on which he was crucified. Another meeting of the Sanhedrim was convened, in the palace of the high priest; and again the rulers were in perplexity. "They feared the people," and felt the necessity both of laying hold of Jesus "by craft," and of avoiding the feast-day, "lest there should be an uproar among the people." (Matt. xxvi. 3-5; Mark xiv. 1, 2; Luke xxii. 1, 2.) This was a more formidable difficulty than the former, for up to this day and hour the great mass of the people seem to have been on the side of Jesus; they came still in crowds to the temple, "early in the morning, to hear him;" and even when he denounced the rulers, and confounded them with his questions and answers, the people appear to have been only the more astonished and pleased. How were the rulers relieved from this perplexity? Not in the first instance by Caiaphas,

that he was "high priest that same year." This seems to imply that the high priest was in some cases inspired, or supposed to be so, and may therefore warrant the conjecture that in this case Caiaphas "of himself" pretended to prophesy, or declare the mind of God, and was supposed to do so by those around him; while at the same time, "not of himself," but by a higher power, he was enabled, or compelled, like Balaam, to utter a truth which he neither intended nor understood.—"And is Caiaphas among the prophets?" says Lightfoot, "and his counsel among the prophecies? He the wickedest man then upon earth, excepting Judas Iscariot: and his, the wickedest counsel that ever was given, since the serpent counselled Eve to destroy mankind. Had not the spirit of prophecy, by the pen of our Evangelist, made this interpretation of it, who could ever have thought of such a construction?"

but by a mightier than he, even Satan, who in this emergency sent Judas the traitor to their assistance. But though Caiaphas was not the first to find out the way of getting out of this difficulty, he was the first and most active in following it, after it was opened up. Whether he had personally any consultation with Judas, or not, does not appear; but when we find his servant *Malchus*, along with Judas, the leader of the band who took Jesus, we may easily believe that it was by his authority, and according to his orders, that the whole matter was conducted. The zeal and forwardness of that official, imbibed doubtless from the spirit of his master, exposed him to the wayward blow of the correspondingly zealous and forward disciple of Jesus. And though Jesus was led first (perhaps for courtesy or formality's sake) to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, it was in that of Caiaphas, and by Caiaphas himself, that all the process against him was conducted.

This process may be said to have consisted of three parts : 1st a *precognition*, or private, extrajudicial examination of Jesus by the high priest, before the council assembled. The subject of this examination related to "the disciples of Jesus, and his doctrine;" and the design of it plainly was to obtain from himself something on the ground of which he might be accused and condemned when the council met. The man who had already counselled that it was "expedient" for him and his fellow-rulers that Jesus should die for the people, would have no scruples in endeavouring to find matter for His condemnation from His own mouth. But this sinister attempt Jesus easily frustrated by appealing with dignity to the publicity of his ministrations, and suggesting to the unjust judge that the proper way of proceeding was to ask those who stood around him, and had often heard his doctrine.¹ It was in reply to this that, in the presence of

¹ John xviii. 19-21. "Why askest thou me? ask them who heard me, what I have said unto them: *behold THESE know what I said.*" The last clause of this verse is peculiarly emphatic in the original, and seems to mean more than the Eng. version conveys. Our Lord appears to refer, not generally to those who heard him, but to the "chief priests and officers of the Jews" who had brought him from the garden, and now stood around him in the presence

the miscreant high priest, and without challenge from him, one of the officers smote Jesus on the face, and so began that course of indignity and cruelty with which He was treated on that terrible morning, first in the high priest's palace, by both rulers and servants,—next in the palace of Herod, by "Herod and his men of war,"—and next by Roman soldiers in the judgment-hall of Pilate.

The *second* part of the process against Jesus was his formal trial before the council. In this, an attempt was made, but signally failed, to find some valid charge against him, involving death, by means of false witnesses. Doubtless some of the very persons to whom Jesus had referred, as able to tell what he had taught publicly—the creatures and tools of the high priest and rulers,—were brought forward for this purpose; and as if to show how soon they had begun to "lie in wait for his halting," and how ready they were to "wrest his words" to their own malignant purposes, almost the very first words Jesus had uttered in public—his mystic saying, at his first passover, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,"—were particularly remembered, and the attempt was made to turn them into a ground of condemnation. Whether it was, however, that the witnesses disagreed, or that the rulers felt that a sentence of death could not plausibly be based on so dark and doubtful a saying, so it was, that the attempt failed, and once more the council was at a stand.

Now comes the *third* and most important part of this ineffably iniquitous procedure. The shrewd and truculent high priest is again the sole actor. He had a scheme in reserve which was sure to succeed, when all others failed. It was deep; it must have been deliberated on, in his own mind, though perhaps not breathed to his associates; and it seems to argue an ac-

of the high priest. He had said a little before to these very persons, when they were binding him, "I sat daily *with you* teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me"—(Matt. xxvi. 55): and now therefore he refers the high priest to them, as knowing what he had taught: *q.d.*, 'There is no scarcity of witnesses as to my doctrine; you have many such present.' Then glancing his eye around (for being bound he could not stretch out his hand towards them) he said, "*Behold these persons know what I said.*"

quaintance with the character of Jesus, and a conviction of the truth of his claims, and therefore a villany, which we would tremble to ascribe to any even of the Jewish rulers without being compelled. What was it? It was to "adjure" Jesus himself "by the living God," to declare, *Whether he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* Observe, not *the Christ* merely, but *the Christ the Son of God!* And mark, also, that no man, in the circumstances in which Caiaphas was placed, would—as a last resource, and as a means of securing the death of Jesus—have made this solemn appeal to Jesus himself, who did not believe that he was in truth what he said, "the Christ the Son of God." Caiaphas could not imagine Jesus to be a crack-brained enthusiast; for that was inconsistent with his "many miracles," and the danger which the rulers apprehended therefrom. He could not regard Him as a wicked impostor, who would not speak the truth; for then this appeal would have frustrated his whole design. Jesus had only, for the time, to disown the claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah, and the council's hold on him was gone. The high priest must have expected either that Jesus would *not* answer to the adjuration at all, or that He would answer *truly*. In the one case, He could be condemned as a profane person, for despising the name and disregarding the authority of God, *by whom* He had been thus adjured. In the other case—that of answering *according to truth*,—Caiaphas must have expected that He could be condemned for blasphemy: *i.e.* he must have believed Jesus to be, *truly*, "*The Son of God.*"—Thus, however dreadful, the conclusion appears unavoidable, that the high priest knew the truth about Jesus as "*the Christ, the Son of God*" (and that, too, in a sense in which the Pharisees at least held the title to imply equality with God), yet that knowing this he deliberately plotted and compassed His condemnation and crucifixion! And this conclusion, I apprehend, is corroborated by the words of Christ himself to Pilate: "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John xix. 11)—words which must refer to the high priest,—for *he* had delivered or sent Jesus to Pilate,—and which were the only

answer which our blessed Lord returned to the anxious inquiry of Pilate—(when he heard that Jesus had “made himself the Son of God”)—“*Whence art thou?*” To this inquiry Jesus at first gave no reply, but afterwards he said, “*Therefore* (*‘in reference to this’*¹ i.e. Whence I am) *he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin*”: *q.d.*, ‘He knows whence I am, and who I am, and his criminality and guilt, therefore, are immeasurably greater than thine.’

But to return to the process before the Sanhedrim, Jesus had no sooner answered the solemn adjuration of the high priest, than the hypocritical Sadducee “rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what need have we of further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.” (Matt. xxvi. 65-68; Mark xiv. 63-65.)—The rulers had now so far gained their end. How they carried their cause to the Roman governor and prosecuted it before him, so as to obtain his consent to the death of Jesus, though indicating almost equal villany, it is not necessary for our purpose to inquire. Our object in this Note was simply to vindicate what was said in the Discourse of the character and management of Caiaphas; and we think we have done so.

It may be objected that there are several passages of Scripture which contradict these representations as to the Jewish rulers,—particularly these: (Acts iii. 17) “And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, *as did also your rulers*;” (Acts xiii. 27) “They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because *they knew him not*, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, have fulfilled them, in condemning him;” and (1 Cor. ii. 7, 8) “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God had ordained before the world to our glory;

¹ “This use of the phrase (*διὰ τοῦτο*), which seems established on sufficient authority, gives light to some rather obscure passages of Scripture: Matt. xiii. 52; Mark xii. 14; John xix. 11.”—*Dr Brown on Civil Obedience*, 3d Ed., p. 122.

which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."—It is plain, however, that if these passages contradict what we have said of the Jewish rulers, they still more palpably contradict some other passages which support, and even go beyond, what we have said: for instance, the *spirit* of Christ's words in the parable (Matt. xxi. 38), "When the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, *This is the heir*: come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance;" and the very *letter* of John's words, when speaking both of the Messiahship and of the divine glory of Christ (John xii. 42, 43), "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also *many believed on him*; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (Comp. also John xv. 24.)

Were it incumbent on us to reconcile these scriptures with each other, or with our conclusion as to Caiaphas, the simplest and easiest mode of doing so, perhaps, would be to resort to Andrew Fuller's explanation, and contend that, in condemning and crucifying Christ, some of the Jewish rulers acted *ignorantly*, and others *knowingly*, and that the one set of passages refer to the one class of rulers, and the other to the other. The apostles, Peter and Paul, when wishing to set forth the criminality of the Jewish rulers as softly as was consistent with truth, would be warranted to say that they sinned in ignorance, if only the great majority of them did so. In addition to this, however, it may be contended, we think, that the Jewish rulers' ignorance of Christ is asserted, in the first class of scriptures, not *absolutely* but *relatively*. It is their ignorance of him as the subject of prophecy, and of the revelation in him of the "hidden wisdom of God," that is specially asserted in these passages. In the first (Acts iii. 17, 18), the direct bearing of the apostle's statement is that *God* had fulfilled the prophecies concerning the "Holy One and the Just," through the Jews' ignorance of *them*; in the second (Acts xiii. 27), it is that *the Jews themselves* had, in their ignorance, fulfilled the pro-

phesies which were read every Sabbath day among them;¹ and in the third (1 Cor. ii. 8) it is expressly said that what the princes of this world were ignorant of was the "hidden wisdom which God had ordained before the world to our glory." Now all this is quite true, and at the same time quite consistent with what we maintain, and what the other passages seem to assert, that some of the Jewish rulers were unable, in their hearts and consciences, to resist the evidence for the Messiahship and divinity of Jesus derived from his own works and words. There was not only a division among them as a body, but a strife in the bosoms of some of them as individuals. So far as the evidence for Christ lay in the prophecies, it was dark as midnight to them. So far as it shone out from his own miracles and life, it must have been clear as noon-day. Thus light and darkness, faith and unbelief, contended for the mastery within them. Which were they to act upon? Which to resist? "They loved the darkness rather than the light," and therefore resisted the latter. They resisted it knowingly, consciously. Not only so,—we may go a step further, and presume at least to which class of the rulers these more 'knowing ones' belonged. The Pharisees, bigoted to their own views of prophecy and accustomed to blaspheme the miracles of Christ, were more likely to act in comparative ignorance; while the Sadducees who disowned the prophets, but could not deny miracles which appealed to their senses, were more likely to act against their knowledge. It is enough for our purpose to maintain that Caiaphas did so, and we

¹ The construction of Acts xiii. 27 is peculiar and difficult. Scarcely two commentators take the same view of it. There are several ways of interpreting the verse so as not to contradict the other scriptures quoted above; any one of which seems preferable to our translation. Some make *τούτων* refer to *ὁ λόγος* in the verse preceding (*L. de Dieu ex Syr.*; *Webst. and Wük. Gr. N. T.*); others render *τούτων ἀγνοήσαντες*, 'not acknowledging him'—'denying him' (*Robinson's Gr. and Eng. Lex.*; *Heinrichs—N. T. Ed. Kop.*); while others separate these two words, making the former to be governed by *πρίσταντες*, and the latter to govern *τὰς φωνὰς*:—so as to bring out the sense, 'They that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, not understanding even the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, in condemning him, have fulfilled them.'—(*Knatch. Annot.*; *Beza*; *Hammond*; etc.)

think it not improbable that, from his personal acquaintance with the beloved disciple (John xviii. 16), he had a knowledge of Jesus, which none of the other rulers possessed.

NOTE III., p. 70.

Apparent discrepancies in the Gospel narratives.

In the first edition of this volume, a solution of the difference between the evangelists Mark and John, as to the hour of our Lord's crucifixion, which had previously been published in a religious periodical, was given in this note. That solution has been pronounced untenable by judges whose authority the author would reckon it presumption to dispute. As however the learned reader may wish to judge for himself, and as the proposed solution involves points confessedly obscure, instead of withdrawing it altogether, the author gives the substance in the note below,¹ and now

¹ "The discrepancy referred to is well known. Mark says (ch. xv. 25) that Jesus was crucified at the *third* hour; John says (ch. xix. 13-16) that when Pilate sat down on the judgment-seat to condemn Jesus or deliver him to be crucified, "it was about the *sixth* hour." Thus the one makes Jesus to be crucified *three hours* before he was, according to the other, condemned. The following was the explanation proposed:—While the Romans like the Jews had a *natural* day, from sunrise to sunset, which they divided into twelve hours—these hours being of different lengths at different seasons of the year,—they had also a *civil* day which, like ours, was reckoned from midnight to midnight, but instead of being divided into *twenty-four*, was divided into *sixteen* equal parts. (See *Adam's Rom. Antiq.*, *Boyd's Ed.*, p. 269, etc.) Each of these parts would of course be equal to an hour and a half of our time, so that, beginning from midnight, the *sixth* hour of the Roman civil day would terminate at *nine o'clock a.m.* of our day, which at the season of the year when Christ was crucified (the vernal equinox) was also the termination of the *third* hour of the Jewish or Roman natural day. Thus, using different modes of notation, the two evangelists would point to precisely the same hour as that of the crucifixion,—the *third* hour of the natural day, and *nine o'clock* of our day.—Whether this solution of the difficulty in question be tenable or not,—it is at least a curious coincidence that there is a precisely similar discrepancy between the Roman historian Suetonius and the Jewish historian Josephus, as to the hour at which the emperor Caligula was assassinated, which also can be removed precisely in the same way. The one makes it the *seventh* hour, and the other the *ninth*, which according to the different notations mentioned above would be about one o'clock p.m. of our time.—(*Suet. Calig.* ch. 58; *Jos. Ant.* xix. 1, 14.)

introduces in its place some judicious observations on the discrepancies of Scripture generally, from a recent publication of the author of "The Eclipse of Faith," which better gain the principal end he had in view in this note, but which had not previously come under his notice.

The learned writer proposes three ways of dealing with discrepancies in Scripture, the last of which he himself prefers. The first is, on the supposition that inspiration did not plenarily protect against infirmities of intellect any more than errors of conduct, to regard these discrepancies (even if irreconcilable) as *mistakes*, which do not, however, affect the validity of Scripture generally. The second is, resting on the general evidence for the Bible, to let the apparent discrepancies in it alone, and wait for further light. He then goes on :—

"But there is a third course, in my judgment better than the *second*, and the one to which I myself most incline ; it is that of combining with this *abstinence* from all dogmatic decision which the *second* course requires, a reverential remembrance of the many instances in which discrepancies, once vehemently insisted on, have yielded to further investigation. Hence, a suspicion, at all events founded on induction, that if we will but wait with a little patience, that patience will be rewarded with a satisfactory solution. Just so we act when we meet with phenomena which *seem* to shock our notions of the divine benevolence, in the department of physical inquiry ; we do not foolishly imagine that every difficulty we meet with that we cannot solve is absolutely insoluble, but we wait with confidence for further light.

"'But is not this an act of unreasoning faith?' you will perhaps say.—No, an act of *reason* ; for it is founded on the experience of the past. I see that many difficulties which half a century ago were as clamorously proclaimed to be 'palpable contradictions' to all history and all probability as those which still perplex us, have been removed. What *right*, then, have I to assume that the same will not happen, if I have but patience, with the remainder? Ought

I not, on a fair *induction* (not merely on an *à priori* conclusion that indefectible truth *must* belong to all Scripture), to wait not only with patience, but with hope? And I *can* wait, not merely because so many difficulties have yielded, but because I see so plainly that man has more than a trifle yet to learn; that antiquities, history, ethnology, philosophy, chronology, geology, and half a dozen other sciences, are by no means exhausted; and that their progress will, together with the study of the sacred books themselves, tend more and more to throw light on these subjects.

"All this of course is just simply saying that I am not entitled to assume a discrepancy to be *absolutely insoluble*, so long as I see that others which were thought so, proclaimed so, and rejoiced in as such by infidels half a century ago, are now allowed to be so no longer.—We may well believe the truth of what Butler says of the Word of God, in his celebrated work: 'It is not at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered, for all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and past age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before;' and for a similar reason we may equally well believe that increasing light will be thrown on the *difficulties* which meet us, and meet us no less in the investigation of the Works than in the study of the Word of God.—Both the Works and the Word of God are indeed inexhaustible both in beauties and in mysteries; fraught with every element designed to educate the whole man—and amongst the rest, with a few 'hard sayings' for a diligent reason to investigate, and a few, harder still, for a docile faith to receive without fully comprehending at all."—*Selections from the Correspondence of R. E. H. Greyson, Esq., etc.*—Vol. II. pp. 270–282.

APPENDIX.

NOTE IV., p. 72.

F. W. NEWMAN on the *Moral Perfection of Jesus*.

It has been stated in the Discourse that "Infidels have very generally admired the character of Jesus Christ, as depicted in the gospels." For instance, THOMAS CHUBB, an English Deist of last century, in his "*True gospel of Jesus Christ*," says, "In Christ we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit, of a becoming modesty and sobriety, just, honest, upright, sincere; and, above all, of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behaviour. [He was] One, who did no wrong, no injury to any man, in whose mouth was no guile; who went about doing good not only by his ministry, but also in curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature in its native purity and simplicity; and showed at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that gospel which he preached unto them."—The eloquent eulogium pronounced on Christ by the French infidel ROUSSEAU must also be pretty well known.—And even the infamous THOMAS PAINE, amid all the ribaldry with which he assailed the Scriptures, and especially the Gospels, protested that nothing which he had said could apply "even with the most distant disrespect to the *real* character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality which he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind—which has not been exceeded by any."

But there have been exceptions to this as to every other general truth. During the preparation of this volume for the press a much esteemed friend called my attention to PROFESSOR NEWMAN'S observations "*on the moral perfection of Jesus*," requesting me to take some notice of them. I confess that I do so with very considerable reluctance; and that for various reasons:—First, Professor Newman and his writings have already, perhaps, received as much notice as they deserve; and the masterly exposure of him

and them contained in the books of the author of "The Eclipse of Faith," to whom British Christians have been laid under a very weighty obligation, seems to render anything that one, so immeasurably inferior in ability and learning, could say, altogether unnecessary.—Again, I am persuaded that the majority of those into whose hands this volume is likely to come, can know little of either Mr Newman or his writings; and there is some danger that by taking notice of his attack on the moral character of Christ I shall be doing more evil than good.—Above all, the "Phases of Faith" being avowedly a self-revelation, seems to require, as a key to its interpretation, a knowledge of the author's other writings, or of the author himself, which I do not possess. I confess that after a careful perusal of the volume, and a repeated perusal of the chapter "on the moral perfection of Jesus," the author and his system remain, in no small measure, riddles to me. Among other thoughts of him, sometimes I have fancied, as I read, that he might be a simple-minded, but amazingly conceited and self-sufficient sciolist, with a most unhappy idiosyncrasy which—at every turning of the path by which (by his own confession) he has been travelling on from the profession of Calvinism to a species of atheism or rather *self-deification*—was sure to lead him in the wrong direction. At other times I have feared that he might be a deep, double-minded, cunning Jesuit, who, taking the opposite course from his brother, had yet the same goal in view,—labouring in the meantime so to confound all faith, all reason, all scripture, all truth, as to help forward the unhappy tendency of much of the nominal Christianity of Britain to betake itself for repose to the soporific, soul-killing bosom of the "infallible Church." I say these things simply for the purpose of indicating what effect the perusal of Mr Newman's book has had upon my own mind, and what kind of knowledge of *himself* I feel to be desirable before I expect thoroughly to comprehend his writings.

In these circumstances, all that I shall attempt is to make one or two general observations on his chapter regarding

the moral character of Jesus Christ, noticing more particularly his principal charge. If any reader suppose that in doing so I overstep the limits of fair criticism, speaking of Mr Newman himself—of his mental character and motives—as well as of his arguments, I beg to premise that I conceive that I have not only a moral right, but Mr Newman's own invitation, to do so. He says in the beginning of the chapter following that in question, "If any Christian reader has been patient enough to follow me thus far, I now claim that he will judge *my argument* and *me*, as before the bar of God, and not by the conventional standards of the Christian churches." I do not presume to judge him "*as before the bar of God*," i. e. as pronouncing God's judgment on him, if this be his meaning. Let him judge himself, if he will, in this point of view: I disclaim any desire or right to do so. "To his own *judge* he standeth or falleth." But I claim, on the ground of this challenge, to judge *him*, as well as his argument, as before the bar of *man*—of morality, and truth, and fair dealing, of honesty and common sense, as understood and respected among men in such matters,—and, in so far as I can show cause from his own writings, to condemn him too, not only for mistake or mischievous error, but for 'malice prepense'—for malignity. And I have the more right to do so that my object is to warn all (even honest or unwary unbelievers) of what appears to me the exceeding danger and deceitfulness and wickedness of his representations. He has assailed "the worthy name" by which the Christian is called—"his Lord and his God;" he has attempted to put out "the light of the world"—to destroy the hope of universal humanity: I think he has done so not only unfairly, but malignantly; I think he has done so in a cold-blooded and cowardly spirit—"like a madman ('more rogue than fool') casting firebrands, arrows, and death around him, and saying, Am I not in sport?"—and shall I not be warranted to speak of him and his conduct as I think they deserve? I may be taunted with "bigotry" and enmity to "Progress." Any Christian may welcome the taunt in such a cause, and pray God that he may ever be

preserved from being the friend of that *progress* which Mr Newman has been making, and to which he wishes to allure others; for it is a progress to unrelieved atheism—to hopeless darkness and death.

My first remark is that had Mr Newman's argument in the chapter been fairly conducted, *on the premises on which it is professedly based*, a Christian would have felt little concern with it, and been quite indifferent as to what he proved.—For, let the reader observe that Mr Newman is in that chapter reasoning with a "Unitarian friend," and *professedly* discussing, therefore, the moral character of a unitarian Jesus. That "friend" is a Unitarian of a peculiar type. He not only asserts the mere humanity of Jesus, but denies his Messiahship, and yet holds him to have been morally perfect—"infinitely and unapproachably good." Now against this Mr Newman has two arguments, an *a priori*, and an *a posteriori* argument. His first, substantially, is that though we knew nothing of the life and actions of *this Jesus*, we would be warranted to pronounce him *imperfect*, just because he was *human*. And his second is that many of the recorded words and actions of Jesus, *on this supposition*, must be held to be faulty—immoral—sinful. Now with these arguments, I apprehend, a Christian who believes in the only true Jesus Christ—the Jesus Christ of the gospel history—has amazingly little to do. It may be questioned indeed whether, on unitarian principles, Mr Newman's *a priori* argument be a sound one. How does Mr Newman know, on these principles, that in the whole history of the human race there have not been ten thousand morally perfect men? And how could he show that the unitarian Jesus (had such a person ever existed) was not the "chiefest among the ten thousand?" But whether he could or not is 'a matter of moonshine' to Christians. On Calvinistic principles the argument is a sound one; and what it is on unitarian principles we may comfortably leave Mr Newman and his "friend" to settle between themselves. And as to the *a posteriori* argument, every intelligent Christian, I

apprehend, will accede to it. Nay he will go much farther than Mr Newman goes, *on the same premises*. He will say that if Jesus was a mere man and not the Messiah, then *all* his recorded words and actions whatever were sinful, nay unspeakably and inconceivably wicked. His whole life was, *in that case*, a lie—a blasphemous lie—and all his words and actions being in perfect harmony with each other and with the complexion of his whole life, were unspeakably wicked. What is more (though the fact altogether overturns Mr Newman's premises; and that may be the reason, perhaps, why Mr Newman makes no use of it in his argument), Jesus himself altogether disclaimed moral perfection, *on these premises*. This he did when he said to the young Pharisee "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is God." The young man, being a Pharisee, was a Unitarian—he was the *James Martineau* of the day of Christ, who thought himself *good*, and Christ *better*)—he believed in neither the divinity nor the Messiahship of Jesus; yet he called him "good," *i.e.* morally excellent or perfect. But Jesus despised the foolish compliment, and renounced the false honour it was intended to convey.

For these reasons then, and others, we say, that had Mr Newman reasoned fairly *on his own premises*, we should not have been disposed to quarrel with him, or to care what he proved. He would only have showed more conclusively the falsehood and danger of unitarianism. That system we have called "baptized deism—infidelity under a cloak:" it is infidelity masked by the name of Christian and a spurious respect for the character and instructions of Jesus Christ. Mr Newman, with his bolder and more reckless infidelity—his more thorough-going rejection of the Scriptures—has helped to rend this cloak in pieces—to expose the falsehood that lurks under the mask; and we could not have found fault with him for doing so. Unitarianism when it wrestles with infidelity must sooner or later be 'thrown,' just as deism or spiritualism or any other form of infidelity must itself be, when wrestling with atheism—with dark, universal

scepticism. Thanks to the author who has set the latter truth in so clear and powerful a light! Why should he not employ his genius on the former also? a still more needful service, I fear, at least in many quarters.

My second remark is that Mr Newman's mode of conducting the above argument is *most unfair and mischievous*; and that it is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that it is *dishonestly so*.—We have seen that he sets up a unitarian Jesus—a mere figment—a 'man of straw,' as the object of his assault; but through this man of straw his arrows reach, and seem to be designedly aimed at the character and name of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Christian reader cannot but feel, as he reads, that it is the Jesus Christ of gospel history—the Jesus of the Christian faith—that the writer has in eye; that all his accusations are really brought against *Him*; and he cannot help harbouring the dark suspicion that the writer designed this, and that the unitarian—the unhistorical Jesus (as Mr Newman calls him) was set up merely for a *feint*, that the cowardly reviler, when called to account, might have the subterfuge that he was not speaking of a historical but an unhistorical character.¹ For if Mr Newman wished to amuse himself and his friend by speaking of the latter—an imaginary character—ought he not most carefully to have distinguished, and scrupulously to have kept up the distinction, between the real and the imaginary—the historical and the unhistorical Jesus? Was not this most obviously incumbent on him, not only for his own sake, and the sake of others, but especially for the sake of truth, and in order to do the merest justice to Him whose "worthy name" he presumed to affix to the *confessedly* unreal and undefined character of which he was speaking? But instead of this, Mr Newman, by the manner in which he conducts his argument, continually

¹ I use these terms in their plain, acknowledged meaning. If Mr Newman employs them in the Straussian sense—that whatever is supernatural is "unhistorical," the application of the terms will require to be reversed; but the sentiment will not be affected.

confounds the unitarian and the Christian Jesus together. He derives all his shafts against the one from the gospel narratives relating to the other,—grossly perverting these narratives, at the same time, and leaving out of view everything in them which would either blunt or repel his poisoned arrows. As the author of “The Eclipse of Faith” pointedly and justly remarks: “He puts *impressions* for *facts*, *fancies* for *arguments*; speaks when the documents are silent, silences them when they speak; imagines evidence when he pleases, and ignores it when he pleases;—and all for the delightful purpose of proving Christ morally imperfect.”¹ In addition to this Mr Newman repeatedly appeals to the common consent of Christendom in support of his statements and arguments—thus showing either that he confounded the Divine Saviour of the Christian, with the mere ‘model-man’ of the Unitarian—the Lord and God of the one with the ‘fallible teacher’ of the other,—or that notwithstanding his professions he had the former alone in view. And thus it is that all the accusations and aspersions cast upon the Jesus of Mr Newman’s avowed argument in effect fall upon the name and character of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now whether this result be the consequence of Mr Newman’s confusion of mind, or whether it was foreseen and contemplated by him, is to me and any other Christian a matter of little moment. But the suspicion of the latter is forced on the reader by Mr Newman’s own words. He saw the necessity of distinguishing in the manner we have described, when *good* was spoken of Jesus; can the reader believe that he was oblivious of the same necessity only when *ill* was to be spoken of Him? And in addition to this, he warns *all* his readers at the very outset not to read the chapter unless they are quite prepared to hear this *ill* spoken of Him. His words to his unitarian friend are these: “When my friend gives the weight of his noble testimony to the perfection of Jesus, I think it is due to himself and to us (not at all to Jesus!) that he should make clear what he

¹ Defence of The Eclipse of Faith, p. 123.

means by this word 'Jesus.' He ought to publish—(I say it in deep seriousness, not sarcastically)*—an expurgated gospel; for in truth, I do not know how much of what I have now adduced from the gospel as *fact*, he will admit to be fact." How clearly and certainly then did Mr Newman see the justice and necessity of making the distinction we plead for, in the one case—when *good* was to be spoken: and who can believe that he did not see the same thing, though he recklessly tramples on it, in the other—when *ill* was to be spoken? The advice he gives was tenfold more applicable to himself than to his "friend;" seeing the extent to which he receives the Gospel is at least equally doubtful, and he was not giving his testimony, *noble or ignoble*, to the perfection of Jesus, but labouring vainly and wickedly to destroy His reputation, to blast His name, and uproot all faith and hope in Him. For if this was not the design of his whole book, and especially of this particular chapter, what was the design? and what means the language of warning addressed to *all* his readers (not Unitarians merely) at the very opening of this chapter, and before he has yet hinted that the Jesus of whom he was to speak was one of his own or his friend's imagination? The first sentence of the chapter is, "Let no reader peruse this chapter, who is not willing to enter into a discussion, as free and unshrinking, concerning the personal excellencies and conduct of Jesus, as that of Mr Grote concerning Socrates." Again he says "I give fair warning to *all* not to read any further, or else to blame themselves if I inflict on them 'unspeakable pain' by differing from their judgment of a *historical or unhistorical character*."—Now what does this mean? Does it not seem as if Mr Newman contemplated making a cold-blooded as well as cowardly attack on the character of Jesus Christ? Does it not argue that he *knew* and *meant* that, while disproving the moral perfection of a unitarian Jesus, his charges would attach to the Jesus in whom the Christian believes, as well? What cares any true Christian what Mr Newman charges or proves against an unhistorical Jesus? Provided he clearly distinguish him from the Jesus of the

gospels, and of the Christian faith, he might prove such an one to be an incarnate devil, without giving pain to a Christian, save for those who believed in, or admired such a character.—But enough of this: my complaint is that Mr Newman, while professing to speak of the imperfection of one person, really, and apparently with design, asperses (under a mask) the character of another; and also that he mutilates and perverts the history of that other, in order to gain his end. To adopt a figure already used, he takes the portraiture of Jesus Christ contained in the gospels, and after (with the aid of his unitarian friend) blotting out the most glorious lineaments, and deforming others—adding at the same time many touches of his own,—he holds it out to the whole world of admirers and cavillers, and boastfully exclaims, ‘Do ye call that a faultless picture?’ And his avowed object is to destroy confidence both in the authors and in the subject of the picture—both in the representation and in the person represented.—Had it not been for this, I certainly should not have thought Mr Newman’s lucubrations worthy of notice.

The third remark I make on Mr Newman’s charges against the moral character of Jesus, is that they are all the products of his own diseased heart or brain, and that the principal of them is a *monstrous, misshapen, hideous abortion*.—Mr Newman founds a charge of vanity and “blundering self-sufficiency” against Christ, on the ground of his answer to the question of those who tempted him on the subject of paying tribute to Cæsar—“Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” But the whole weight of his charge rests on his own *stupid*, if not designedly *false*, interpretation of these words—an interpretation which would disgrace a schoolboy, and which, I verily believe, was never given or imagined by any other but Mr Newman himself. He makes Christ’s words to mean that “because a coin bears Cæsar’s head, *therefore* it is Cæsar’s property, and that he may demand to have as many of such coins as he chooses paid over

to him." Well may he say that this "is puerile and notoriously false;" but the puerility and the falsehood are chargeable only on himself, not on the words of Jesus.—Mr Newman charges Christ further with "affectation and vanity and incipient sacerdotalism," on the ground of his enigmatical and dark sayings, some of which are very obscure to Mr Newman unto this day. It may be so, and yet they might all serve some good and wise and holy purpose to those who heard them, even though they might not fully understand them. And certainly, after the specimen given above of Mr Newman's capacity to understand or ability to darken even a very *clear saying*, his inability to understand a *dark saying* is no great proof either of its immorality or inutility. There is at least one of Christ's enigmatical sayings, I may remark by the way, which Mr Newman himself has made very clear to me, as he will make it, I have no doubt, to most of those who read his book:—"If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness; if therefore the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"—But some of Christ's enigmatical sayings are very clear to Mr Newman. If he can graft an inconsistency upon them, that seems at once to make them clear. Accordingly that saying, and others like it, "Sell that ye have, and give alms," are, very clearly to him, an inculcation of "religious beggary as the *only* form and mode of spiritual perfection,"—and were intended to be positively and permanently binding on all the disciples of Christ. Whether any one else has ever had this idea of these precepts, I shall not take upon me to say; I believe John of Leyden and some other crack-brained enthusiasts have approached the idea; but when Mr Newman says that "even the Church of Rome will admit it to be fanatical and mischievous," and that "Protestants universally reject it as deplorable absurdity," he ought to have produced evidence that some others besides himself ever fathered it on Christ—ever so understood the precepts in question. The whole Christian world, by his own confession, disowns his interpretation—denies that Christ ever meant such a thing; and it is certainly some-

what too great a stretch of arrogance, even on the part of Mr Newman, to expect that *his* interpretation of Christ's words is to be received without question, in direct opposition to all the learning and common sense of the Christian world. This would not be *incipient*, but *consummate sacerdotalism*.

But dwelling on such matters is sheer trifling. As the man would be counted a hopeless driveller who entered on a long and laborious argument of many parts to prove Shakespeare's *Iago* not a "morally perfect" character, so I fear Mr Newman must be esteemed, in bringing forward such charges against Jesus, if he believe his own principal charge; for if it be proved, *Iago* himself must be regarded as a mere 'innocent' in comparison with Jesus Christ. What is this charge? As I understand it, it is shortly this:—Jesus, "seduced" partly by his own "vanity," and partly by "the encouragement given him by Peter and others," came to be persuaded ("not without misgivings," but "strongly enough to act upon") that he was the Messiah, when he was not. Pressed by the difficulties of his position, he at last resolved to avoid "becoming an impostor," by "purposely rushing on death." And this he accomplished, not by laying violent hands on himself, as Mr Newman thinks he should have done (telling us the very way in which he might have sacrificed himself), but by "purposely exasperating the Jewish rulers into a great crime—the crime of taking away his life from personal resentment."

You see, Christian reader, how this man, as if with the power, or sleight of hand, of a conjuror, has in a twinkling transferred the greatest crime of all time—the murder of the Son of God—from the Jewish rulers to Jesus himself, and only aggravated it in the process of transference. There are three gigantic crimes imputed to Christ in this monstrous charge:—1st, That of being a *religious impostor*; for however the accuser tries to avoid the *appearance* of charging this on Christ, he plainly both does it, and means to do it. If Christ resolved to die in order to screen his weakness and avoid "becoming an impostor," as Mr Newman has it,

he was an impostor already. He knew, in that case, that his claim was false, and he died only to avoid detection. And is not *religious imposture* among the greatest of all possible crimes? It is worse than murder or blasphemy; for it involves both—it involves the murdering of souls, and the blaspheming of the Source of truth.—2*d*, This charge imputes to Christ *the crime of the suicide*—the abominable crime of sane, resolute, deliberate self-murder, and that too for a wicked end,—a self-murder, therefore, compared with which, even that of Judas was venial.—And 3*d*, This charge imputes to Christ, in addition, one of the worst forms of *the crime of the murderer*—that of purposely instigating or exasperating others to commit it.

I cannot but ask here the pardon of the pious Christian reader for bringing these things before him. But I wish to set forth without exaggeration or diminution the unparalleled presumption and malignity of this man and his accusation. All this is charged on a *Jesus* who was a mere man and no Messiah; but that Jesus is identified with Jesus Christ of the Christian Scriptures and the Christian faith. These Scriptures and that faith are sedulously ransacked for arguments to support the charge; and I am warranted therefore (whether Mr Newman like it or not) to say that all this is attributed to *Him* whom voices from heaven proclaimed to be the “beloved of God,”—in whom men saw “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,”—whom his bitterest enemies could not convict of a fault,—whom Judas himself declared “innocent,”—and whom even the devils (though in spite and envy) were compelled to own as the “holy one of God!”

Let us glance, for a moment, at the manner in which Mr Newman endeavours to make good this strange and hitherto unheard-of charge against Christ—so strange, that it is well-nigh fitted, methinks, to realise the poet’s picture in all its parts:

“So strange, that common fools look’d on amazed;
And wise and sober men together drew,
And trembling stood; and angels in the heavens
Grew pale, and talked of vengeance as at hand.”

T

The following is the whole of the argumentative support which I have been able to find for this monstrous charge in Mr Newman's book : and as Mr Newman has complained of some of his critics dealing only with his conclusions, not with his arguments, I ask the reader to weigh the statement, sentence by sentence, clause by clause ; for, the more narrowly it is examined, the worse for its author and his conclusion too :—

"On his arrival in the suburbs, his first act was, ostentatiously to ride into the city on an ass's colt in the midst of the acclamations of the multitude, in order to exhibit himself as having a just right to the throne of David. Thus he gave a handle to imputations of intended treason.—He next entered the temple courts, where doves and lambs were sold for sacrifice, and—(I must say it to my friend's amusement, and in defiance of his kind but keen ridicule), committed a breach of the peace by flogging with a whip those who trafficked in the area. By such conduct he undoubtedly made himself liable to legal punishment, and probably might have been publicly scourged for it, had the rulers chosen to moderate their vengeance. But he 'meant to be prosecuted for treason, not for felony,' to use the words of a modern offender. He therefore commenced the most exasperating attacks on all the powerful, calling them hypocrites and whited sepulchres and vipers' brood ; and denouncing upon them the 'condemnation of hell.' He was successful. He had both enraged the rulers up to the point of thirsting for his life, and given colour to the charge of political rebellion. He resolved to die ; and he died. Had his enemies contemptuously let him live, he would have been forced to act the part of Jewish Messiah, or renounce Messiahship."—*Phases of Faith*. Third Ed. p. 159.

This is Mr Newman's proof of the very foundation of his charge, that Jesus went up to Jerusalem, at his last passover, with the purpose of exasperating the Jewish rulers "into the great crime of taking away his life from personal resentment."—I say nothing at present of the well-known facts, so everasive of the whole of this ridiculous hypothesis, that for two years before this the Jewish rulers had been "thirsting for the life of Jesus," and not only so, but "going about to kill him ;" and that, several weeks or months before, a resolution had been passed in the supreme council that he should "die for the people." Facts like these are nothing to Mr Newman. It is one of the "phases" of his "faith," as will immediately be seen, that it can not only *ignore* facts but *invert* them, and not only "remove mountains," but annihilate time and space, and obliterate all the land-

marks both of history and morality.—Nor do I dwell at present on the fact that the one part of the above fiction is evasive of the other; for it represents Jesus as “*acting the part of the Jewish Messiah*,” by riding into Jerusalem as “the son of David,” for the very purpose of not *being forced* “to act the part of the Jewish Messiah.” I pass by such things: I wish to humour Mr Newman by taking to pieces and looking narrowly at the paragraph itself: for it is a most laboriously artificial paragraph. I have no doubt that it must have cost Mr Newman much painful and offensive toil, to lick this product of his *genius* into its present “execrable shape”—

“If shape it may be call'd, that shape has none
Distinguishable in member, joint or limb”—

and I wish therefore to do as ample justice as time and space permit to both its structure and spirit.

Let the reader then look back to the first sentence and clause.—It would be too great a scandal on the learning of a professor in a metropolitan university, “formerly fellow of Baliol College, Oxford”—who boasts, “Have I not been twenty-five years a reader of the Bible? Have I not full eighteen years been a student of theology? Have I not employed seven of the best years of my life, with ample leisure, in this very investigation?”—(the investigation of Christ's claim to be the Messiah)—it would, I say, be too great a scandal on his learning to suppose him so ignorant as to think *Bethany* (from which Christ rode into Jerusalem on an ass's colt) to be a “suburb” of Jerusalem. Many a sabbath-school child has more knowledge than to make a blunder like this. But why then does Mr Newman so call it? I am unable to fancy any other reason than that it was indispensably needful to Mr Newman's object to avoid even the mention of *Bethany*. The very name would have reminded Mr Newman *himself*, as well as his reader, of what had transpired a few weeks before at that “town”—the resurrection of Lazarus—and of what had been the consequence, namely, the resolution of the rulers to kill Jesus. Thus it would have blown up, prematurely, the mine which

Mr Newman was labouring to construct, and only showed the folly and malignity of his design. The mention of Bethany would have done more than this: it would have reminded the reader at least, of the account given by an evangelist of "the acclamations of the multitude," which Mr Newman with over-refinement of artifice even for him imputes as a crime to Jesus: "The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people (the multitude) also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle" (John xii. 17, 18).—As to these "acclamations of the multitude," it might be a ticklish business for Mr Newman's "faith," with all its "phases," or for his "inward oracle," with all its "revelations," to explain how they came to fall in so nicely with Christ's wicked purpose of exasperating the rulers to murder him—how they occurred just at the nick of time when Jesus needed them, and so became an essential part of "*his first act.*" Was it accidental? Or had Jesus actually bribed the multitude to shout "hosannas to the Son of David?" Or was he, after all, God, and able to influence them by his Spirit, so as to constrain them thus to act? Or was it simply, as the evangelist tells us, the natural result of the people's having heard of and believed in the resurrection of Lazarus? Had I the opportunity I would advise Mr Newman to think of this, and explain it if he can in his next edition. It cannot surely be impossible to one who could so easily annihilate the Mount of Olives, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and turn Bethany into a suburb of Jerusalem.

Not to waste time on the second short sentence of the above quotation—"Thus he gave a handle to imputations of intended treason"—I would only request the reader to ponder for himself the nice little crime here laid to the charge of Jesus—that of "intended treason," and the equally nice euphemism employed to describe the villany of the Jewish rulers. They falsely and malignantly accused Jesus before the Roman governor of *actual treason* (Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 12), but here their base accusations are merely "impu-

tations of intended treason ;" and for these imputations, too, Jesus himself is alone to blame, for he gave the good and simple-hearted men a "handle" to them ! What simpletons, in Mr Newman's estimation, the Jewish rulers must have been ! And what a pity that they had to do with such a deep and consummate villain as his "unhistorical Jesus !"

Let us come to the third sentence, charging Jesus with what Mr Newman for his unitarian friend's amusement calls a "breach of the peace." I shall not say a word either of the boyish flippancy or the devilish profanity of this language. I shall give Mr Newman the advantage of supposing that he would not have so spoken of the real, historical Jesus, had he been thinking of him alone. I shall suppose that as he wished to *amuse* his unitarian friend, he has the *unitarian Jesus* chiefly in his eye ; and I shall speak of the sentence only as perverting, falsifying, and confounding historical statements in reference to the real Jesus. I shall not say whether I regard these perversions of plain history as intentional or unintentional—villanous forgeries, or stupid blunders : the reader may judge of this for himself when I have exposed them. There are I apprehend three such glaring perversions in this one short sentence :—1st, As to the *time* of the incident referred to in the sentence ; for what the evangelist states to have taken place at Christ's *first* passover, Mr Newman transfers to his *last*—between which, an interval of three years is generally supposed to have elapsed.¹ That Mr Newman knew this well enough may be deduced from the fact that a few pages further on he cites chapter and verse in John (chap. ii. 18–20), where the sequel of the incident is spoken of. Now what a gross perversion of the

¹ An incident of the same general character is recorded as having taken place at Christ's last passover, (Matt. xxi. 12 ; Mark xi. 15 ; Luke xix. 45) ; but the particular circumstances referred to by Mr Newman are narrated only in connection with that which is recorded by John, and which most certainly took place at Christ's first passover, or at the commencement of his public ministry. John himself expressly states that it took place "not many days" after Christ's first miracle in Cana of Galilee, and his going down to Capernaum with his mother and his brethren and his disciples. (John ii. 1–17.)

gospel narrative is this! Mr Newman so far builds his charge against Christ of "purposely exasperating the rulers" to murder him, on an incident which took place about three years before that purpose, according to himself, was formed. And there is no escape for him from this mistake. If he does not regard the record as true, then the whole charge is without foundation. If he does regard it as true, then it overturns his charge; for, according to that record, the incident built on occurred three years too soon for his purpose.

2dly, As to the *circumstances* of the incident referred to, there is an almost equally gross perversion or falsification of the gospel narrative. Mr Newman speaks only of "doves and lambs for sacrifice" as found by Jesus in "the temple courts"—a very innocent-looking circumstance; John speaks of "oxen and sheep and doves"—a *cattle market*, in short,—as found by him "in the temple," along with "the tables of the money-changers,"—all the characteristics and commodities (together doubtless with the filth and tumult and profanity and roguery) of a public "fair"—in that "holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High" consecrated for ages as "a house of prayer for all nations." We do not expect from Mr Newman any sympathy with that self-consuming zeal for the purity of the house of God which burned in the bosom of Jesus; but what "deadly hate" must that be which has led him so far to misapprehend, or so foully to misrepresent, an incident which in its natural shape and circumstances even an honest infidel might well rejoice in and admire?

But 3dly, The worst perversion of the gospel narrative, in this sentence of which we speak, remains behind. Mr Newman says that Jesus "*flogged with a whip those who trafficked in the area,*" and in a subsequent page where he refers to the same incident he speaks still more bitterly of his "*scourging the people out of the temple courts.*" Now what John says is that Jesus, "when he had made a scourge of small cords, drove all out of the temple, *both the sheep and the oxen.*" Such is the literal meaning of

the original words; and it plainly limits the *all* spoken of to the '*bestial*' found in the temple—"the sheep and the oxen;" and implies that Jesus used the scourge he had made only in reference to *them*. I allow that a reader who was confined to our English version might make the mistake of supposing that Jesus scourged the cattle-dealers as well as the cattle out of the temple; and most readers would see no great harm in his doing so. But Mr Newman, a professor of languages, and "formerly a fellow of Baliol College, Oxford,"—(who has been twenty-five years a reader of the Bible, eighteen years a student of theology, and has spent seven of the best years of his life, with ample leisure, in the investigation of the history and claims of Jesus Christ)—he was not confined to our English version. He must be able surely to read and interpret correctly the simple Greek of John's Gospel! If he is not, then, certainly his own pupils should "clap their hands at him and hiss him out of his place." But if he is able to do this, and yet, either through oversight or design, perverted the sense of scripture, in order to fasten such a ridiculous charge upon the blessed name of the Saviour of the world, then, I have no hesitation in saying that all honourable men ought to clap *their* hands at him and hiss him out of *their* society; for in such a case even oversight argues malignity.

Some may think that it would have been right for Jesus to scourge out of the temple not only the sheep and oxen, but the profane traffickers who polluted it even more than *they*; and along with them also the priests who for gain tolerated or encouraged this abuse. I do not think so. At least Jesus would not have been acting 'in character' had he done so. But this is merely matter of opinion; facts are facts either way; and I defy Mr Newman and all the infidels in the world to prove that Jesus, in any one instance, used physical force—bodily inflictions, or even the shadow or threat of bodily inflictions—in the case of any *rational* being, to compel him to act in accordance with His will, or with the will of His Father. He needed not. He at whose word a troop of armed men "went backward and fell to the

ground," and in whose presence even devils trembled, needed not to employ such means of making 'rationals' submissive. He needed or used them only in the case of 'irrationals.' But all Mr Newman's charge—of "a breach of the peace," along with the "amusing" *witticism* which conveys it—hinges on this illiterate or invidious misinterpretation of the words of the only evangelist who has recorded the incident. And I leave the reader to judge for himself both of the head and heart of the man who could be guilty of such a misinterpretation or misrepresentation of plain history.

I shall pass over two sentences in the above extract from Mr Newman's book, which are, neither of them, without its sting, but which it is unnecessary to dwell upon. I come to the last substantive charge, contained in the sentence: "He therefore commenced the most exasperating attacks on all the powerful, calling them hypocrites and whited sepulchres and vipers' brood; and denouncing upon them the condemnation of hell." Mr Newman subsequently says a good deal about this exasperating language of Jesus; he pronounces it the deed of a fanatic; he represents it, without a shadow of evidence and contrary to fact, as the reason why the popular favour was withdrawn from Jesus, or turned against Him; and, though he does not defend "the cruel punishment which raw resentment inflicted on Him," yet he has "a strong belief that popular indignation," roused by such language, and free from the element of selfishness, "is *righteous* when it pronounces the verdict of guilty." All this, and much more that might be quoted, is, as the reader will notice, very like Mr Newman's own "verdict of guilty," not merely on an *unhistorical*, but on the historical Jesus (for how clear is it from such statements who is the Jesus spoken of); but whether it be his own verdict or not, I put no force upon it. Mr Newman is free to hold his own opinion; what I have to do with is his perversion of the evangelical narratives; and the sentence I have quoted plainly implies that if Christ now "*commenced* the most exasperating attacks on all the powerful" *for the purpose* of provoking them to murder him, he had never

used such language about the rulers *before*; that they did not *deserve* it; and that Christ, had he not "meant to be prosecuted for treason, not for felony," would *not* have used that language. The word *therefore* in the sentence, and the whole structure of the paragraph, imply these things.—Now what are the facts of the case? They are, *first*, that our blessed Lord had long before addressed substantially the same language to the Scribes and Pharisees (comp. Matt. xxv. 13-32 with Luke xi. 37-54);—*secondly*, that John the Baptist had (before the ministry of Christ commenced) used the strongest of these epithets—"the vipers' brood"—of the Pharisees and Sadducees, *i.e.* "all the powerful," "denouncing on them also the condemnation of hell" (Matt. iii. 7);—*thirdly*, that Jesus had long before applied the same epithet to the Pharisees who reviled his miracles (Matt. xii. 34); and *finally*, that all sacred and profane history coincides in testifying that the worst of these epithets was richly deserved by the generality of the Jewish rulers, and that John and Jesus required no other motive than love of truth, and zeal for God, to lead them to make use of such language in reference to these deceitful and desperately wicked men.—Mr Newman may have his own opinion about the wisdom of such "invectives against the rich and the powerful." With that I do not intermeddle. But his allegation that Jesus "commenced" to utter such invectives, at his last passover, for the purpose of exasperating the rulers to murder him, is a false and shameless perversion of all history and all decency and all truth. It is a malicious and blasphemous fiction. Even the vipers' brood I suspect never had a worse thought, or said a more blasphemous thing of him than this.

But enough of this man and his charges. I think I have proved what I have said, that these charges are entirely the products of Mr Newman's own brain or heart, and that the last of them is a "monstrous, misshapen, and hideous abortion."—Much more could easily be said of the chapter "on the moral perfection of Jesus." But the pious reader must be disgusted and horrified with what has been

already brought before him ; and I have only to make an apology to *him* for entering so far into the subject, and dwelling so long on it. He ought to remember that this note is not intended for him, save in the way of unfolding to him the possible wickedness of the human heart ; but that it is intended for the warning and conviction of the young and thoughtless, or even of inconsiderate unbelievers, who by reading such books as Mr Newman's may have their judgment warped, their unbelief confirmed, their hearts corrupted, and their souls destroyed. As to Mr Newman himself, the most charitable sentiment one can entertain is the hope that he is not fully responsible for what he has written ; but that writing, to some extent, " ignorantly in unbelief," he may still, like the " blasphemer and injurious" man of Tarsus, be possibly within the reach of the " exceedingly abundant grace" of Him whom he has reviled ; and that therefore he may still be prayed for ; for if even Saul of Tarsus was forgiven and saved, who may not be ? " It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief : Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first"—me, the chief of sinners—" Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

I cannot close this note without appending the following eloquent and impressive sentences on the same subject from the "*Defence of the Eclipse of Faith* :"—

" And now, what, after all, does all the carping criticism of this chapter amount to ? Little as it is in itself (?), it absolutely vanishes,—it is felt that the Christ here portrayed *cannot* be the right interpretation of the history,—in the face of all those glorious scenes with which the Evangelical narrative abounds, but of which there is here an entire oblivion. But humanity will not forget them ; men still wonder at the ' gracious words which proceeded out of Christ's mouth,' and persist in saying, ' Never man spake like this man.' The brightness of the brightest names pales and

wanes before the radiance which shines from the person of Christ. The scenes at the tomb of Lazarus, at the gate of Nain, in the happy family at Bethany, in the 'upper room,' where He instituted the beautiful feast which should forever consecrate His memory, and bequeathed to His disciples the legacy of His love; the scenes in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the summit of Calvary, and at the Sepulchre; the sweet remembrance of the patience with which He bore wrong, the gentleness with which He rebuked it, and the love with which He forgave it; the thousand acts of benign condescension by which He well earned for Himself, from self-righteous pride and censorious hypocrisy, the name of the 'friend of publicans and sinners;'—these; and a hundred things more which crowd those concise memorials of love and sorrow with such prodigality of beauty and of pathos, will still continue to charm and attract the soul of humanity, and on these the highest genius as well as the humblest mediocrity will love to dwell. These things lisp to infancy, loves to hear on its mother's knees, and over them age, with its grey locks, bends in devoutest reverence. No; before the infidel can prevent the influence of these compositions, he must get rid of the Gospels themselves, or he must supplant them by *fictions* yet more wonderful! Ah! what bitter irony has involuntarily escaped me! But if the last be impossible, at least the Gospels must cease to exist before Infidelity can succeed. Yes, before infidels can prevent men from thinking as they ever have done of Christ, they must blot out the gentle words with which, in the presence of austere hypocrisy, the Saviour welcomed that timid guilt that could only express its silent love in an agony of tears;—they must blot out the words addressed to the dying penitent, who, softened by the majestic patience of the mighty Sufferer, detected at last the Monarch under the veil of sorrow, and cast an imploring glance to be 'remembered by Him when He came into His Kingdom;'—they must blot out the scene in which the demoniacs—or the maniacs, if the infidel will, for it does not help him,—sat listening at His feet, and 'in their right mind;'—they must blot out the remembrance of the tears

which He shed at the grave of Lazarus, not surely for him whom He was about to raise, but in pure sympathy with the sorrows of humanity, for the myriad myriads of desolate mourners, who could not, with Mary, fly to Him and say, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here my mother,—brother,—sister had not died!'—They must blot out the record of those miracles which charm us, not only as the proofs of His mission, and guarantees of the truth of His doctrine, but as they illustrate the benevolence of His character, and are types of the spiritual cures His Gospel can yet perform;—they must blot out the scenes of the Sepulchre, where love and veneration lingered, and saw what was never seen before, but shall henceforth be seen to the end of time,—the Tomb itself irradiated with angelic forms, and bright with the presence of Him 'who brought life and immortality to light';—they must blot out the scene where deep and grateful love wept so passionately, and found Him unbidden at her side,—type of ten thousand times ten thousand, who have 'sought the grave to weep there,' and found joy and consolation in Him, 'whom though unseen they loved';—they must blot out the discourses in which He took leave of His disciples, the majestic accents of which have filled so many departing souls with patience and with triumph;—they must blot out the yet sublimer words in which He declares Himself 'the Resurrection and the Life,'—words which have led so many millions more to breathe out their spirits with child-like trust, and to believe, as the gate of death closed behind them, they would see Him who is invested with the 'keys of the invisible world,' 'who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens,' letting in through the portal which leads to immortality the radiance of the skies;—they must blot out, they must destroy, these and a thousand other such things, before they can prevent Him from having the Pre-eminence, who loved, because He loved us, to call Himself the 'Son of Man,' though angels called Him the 'Son of God.'

"It is vain to tell men it is an *illusion*. If it be an *illusion*, every variety of *experiment* proves it to be *inveterate*, and will

not be dissipated by a million of Strausses and Newmans! *Probatum est.* At His feet guilty humanity of diverse races and nations for eighteen hundred years has come to pour forth in faith and love its sorrows, and finds there 'the peace which the world can neither give nor take away.' Myriads of aching heads and weary hearts have found and will find repose there, and have invested Him with veneration, love, and gratitude, which will never, never be paid to any other name than His."—*Defence, etc.*, p. 141.

NOTE V. p. 80.

On the rapid spread of Christianity in the primitive age.

"The statements which follow are little else than an abridgment of Paley's abridgment of Lardner's full and documented record of the events referred to.—*Tacitus*, the Roman historian, tells us, that in the tenth year of Nero, i.e., the thirtieth year after Christ's ascension,¹ on the Christians being falsely accused by the emperor of the incendiarism of which himself was the author, 'a vast multitude of that religion was discovered to be in that city.'—*Pliny*, the Roman governor of Pontus and Bithynia, writing not quite eighty (seventy-four) years after Christ's ascension, says, 'Many of all ages, and of every rank, and of both sexes, are, and will be, accused of Christianity. The contagion of this superstition has seized not only the cities, but the lesser towns also, and the open country. The temples have been almost forsaken, and few purchase victims for sacrifice.' There is no reason for supposing that Christians were more numerous in Pontus and Bithynia than in other parts of the Roman empire. Christianity did not begin in these countries or near them.—*Justin Martyr*, who wrote about thirty years after Pliny,—106 years after the ascension,—declares, 'There is not a nation either of Greek or Bar-

¹ The tenth year of Nero, the 64th of the Christian era, was rather, as stated in the discourse, the 33d year after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; for these events took place (according to *Hales's Chronology*) in A.D. 31.

barian or any other name, even of those who wander in tribes and live in tents, amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe by the name of the crucified Jesus.'—*Clement of Alexandria*, who comes between forty and fifty years after Justin, says, 'The philosophers were confined to Greece and to their particular retainers; but the doctrine of the Master of Christianity did not remain in Judea as philosophy did in Greece, but is spread throughout the whole world, in every nation and village and city, both of Greeks and Barbarians, converting both whole families and separate individuals,—having already brought over to the truth not a few of the philosophers themselves.'—*Tertullian*, who is but a few years subsequent to Clement, appeals to the Roman magistrates in these terms:—'We are but of yesterday, and we have filled your cities, islands, towns, and boroughs, the camp, the senate, and the forum.' 'In almost every city we form the greater part.' These expressions may seem loose and declamatory, but uttered in the presence of those who could have contradicted them if not substantially true—every way disposed to do so, they cannot be reasonably considered as anything short of satisfactory testimony, that at that time great multitudes of Christians, of all ranks and orders, were to be found in most parts of the Roman empire.—*Origen* who follows Tertullian at the distance of only thirty years, says, 'By the good providence of God the Christian religion has so flourished and increased continually, that it is now freely preached without molestation, although there were a thousand obstacles to the spreading of the doctrine of Jesus in the world.' Within less than eighty years (more) the Roman empire became nominally Christian under Constantine; and it seems plain that it was not so much the Christianity of the emperor which produced the assumption of that profession by the bulk of his subjects, as the general prevalence of Christianity among his subjects that induced that politic prince to assume what appeared to be the dominant faith.'—*The Three Gatherings*, by J. BROWN, D.D.

The same little work contains, in a Note, the following succinct and admirable observations on "the secondary causes which one of the most learned and insidious enemies of our faith, the historian Gibbon, has, with characteristic sarcasm, represented as so efficaciously assisting *the truth* of Christianity in making progress in the world."

"The first of these is 'the inflexible and intolerant zeal of the Christians.' Intolerant zeal was not likely to recommend an obnoxious system to a hostile world. The display of *inflexible* zeal might indeed turn attention to the object in behalf of which it was manifested; but unless that object had other recommendations, the obvious unreasonableness of such an inflexible zeal would have been a barrier to success, not a cause of progress.

"The second cause assigned is 'the doctrine of a future life;' a strong cause, if the primitive teachers of Christianity could but satisfactorily prove it, but as in the former case, otherwise an obstacle rather than a help: especially as they represented their doctrine not as the dictate of reason, but as a revelation from God confirmed by miraculous evidence.

"The third cause assigned is their 'pretended miracles.' If the miracles laid claim to were *true miracles*, this is the very cause for their success which *we* assign. But if pretended, how could they have escaped exposure, and how could exposed pretended miracles have helped forward their cause?

"Their 'imposing virtues' is the fourth cause. The remarkable virtues of the Christians did, as they well might, make an impression, and a powerful one;—but they were in no degree fitted to lead men to embrace at such hazard their doctrines, unless they had proved these doctrines by appropriate evidence to be true and divine.

"The 'strict discipline' of the Christians is the last cause assigned for their rapid progress. This is certainly a very paradoxical assertion. Such a discipline in itself was fitted to deter *from*, not to invite *to*, their fellowship; and heathens, and Jews, would certainly require satisfactory evidence of the authority by which such a discipline was imposed before submitting to it.

" Thus we see that some of these causes, as stated above, never had any existence, but in the author's imagination ; others of them are obviously inadequate to the purpose which they are said to have served, and the adequacy of others is entirely owing to that divine interposition by miraculous and saving influence, to disprove the existence of which is the grand object of the whole of the author's learned and laboured discussions.¹

" The only rational, satisfactory account of the *origin* of Christianity is, that it was a revelation from God accompanied with convincing evidence that it was so. The only rational, satisfactory account of its rapid and extensive *progress*, and its permanent *establishment* among mankind, is, that its divine author protected by his providence the teachers of that religion, and accompanied their preaching ' with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and with gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will.' No-where else can the mind find an account of the acknowledged facts as to the origin and progress of Christianity, in which it can reasonably acquiesce. Admit the truth and divinity of Christianity, and all is satisfactorily accounted for. Everything is in that case as you might expect it to be. Deny this, and the most extraordinary revolution that ever took place among men,—a revolution, the consequences of which are still developing themselves—its influences still multiplying and deepening and widening,—while those of many other revolutions, threatening at their occurrence permanently and extensively to affect the interests of the world, have ceased to be felt, and can scarcely be traced by the philosophical historian ;— this most wonderful revolution seems to have been brought about entirely without any adequate cause.

" 'The zeal of the Lord of hosts hath done this.' This hath ' come forth from Him who is wonderful in counsel and ex-

¹ For a fuller expansion of the argument showing the utter untenableness of GIBBON'S hypothesis, the reader may consult Bishop WATSON'S *Apology for Christianity*; LORD HAILES' *Inquiry into the secondary causes which Mr Gibbon has assigned for the rapid growth of Christianity*; MILNER'S (*JOS.*) *Tracts*; and Dr WARDLAW'S *Systematic Theology*, vol. '., § 17.

cellent in working. This is the doing of the Lord; it is marvellous in our eyes.' This is the conclusion of reason as well as the declaration of Scripture. The primitive triumphs of Christianity, and her victories too in succeeding ages appear then only accountable when viewed as the result of a peculiar divine agency,—as the work of 'the Lord God,'—the execution of His purpose,—the fulfilment of His oracle,—the manifestation of His infinite wisdom, and power, and grace."

"If a man can believe that, at a time when the literature of Greece and Rome, then in their meridian lustre, were insufficient for the task,—the son of a carpenter, together with twelve of the meanest and most illiterate mechanics, his associates, unassisted by any supernatural power, should be able to discover or to invent a system of theology the most sublime, and of ethics the most perfect, which had escaped the penetration and learning of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero; and that from this system, by their own sagacity, they had excluded every false virtue, though universally admired, and admitted into it every true virtue, though despised and ridiculed by all the rest of the world: if any one can believe that these men could become impostors, for no other purpose than the propagation of truth; villains, for no end but to teach honesty; and martyrs, without the least prospect of honour or advantage; or that if all this had been possible, these few inconsiderable persons should have been able, in the course of a few years, to spread this religion over a great part of the then known world, in opposition to the interests, pleasures, ambition, and prejudices of mankind; to triumph over the power of princes, the intrigue of states, the force of custom, the blindness of zeal, the influence of priests, the arguments of orators, and the philosophy of the world, without any supernatural assistance; if any one can believe all these miraculous events, contradictory to the constant experience of the powers and dispositions of human nature, he must be possessed of much more faith than is necessary to make him a Christian, and must remain an unbeliever from mere credulity.'—SOAME JENYNS."—*The Three Gatherings*, etc., Note.

NOTE VI., p. 117.

On the designation "THE WORD" given to Christ in the writings of John.

A vast amount of learning has been expended on the question of the origin and import of this designation, given to Christ in his pre-existing nature and condition. The author has no design of entering into any discussion on the subject, but wishes to state simply and shortly what he apprehends to be the only question of importance to the un-

lettered Christian.—That question is *not*, I apprehend, *What John means by the designation?* for its meaning is clearly enough indicated by the evangelist himself, in the beginning of his gospel. He plainly means by it a Divine person, distinct from the Father, yet existing from eternity as God, and acting as the representative or agent of the Father in all the external works of God—THE REVEALED GOD, THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER.—Nor is the question of essential importance, *How John came to use this name?* for he might have reasons for the use of it which cannot now be discovered, or which could not now be duly appreciated though they were known. That question, besides, might be more naturally stated thus: Why John *alone*, among inspired apostles and evangelists, makes use of the name? or, Why even *he* uses it but seldom?—a question to be best answered, doubtless, by the careful study of the passages in which it occurs.—The most important question, I apprehend, is, *How John came to use this title, in his Gospel, in such an abrupt way, without any preparation or explanation as to the person thus introduced to his readers?* Now to this question, on the supposition that John wrote the book of Revelation before he wrote his Gospel, a satisfactory answer may be obtained from the use of the title in the former book. The manner in which the title “THE WORD OF GOD” is introduced there (Rev. xix. 11–16) is abundantly formal and premonitory. The dignity and work of the person to whom it is given, at least under the New Testament economy, are sufficiently defined; and there can be no doubt as to who and what He is—“THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”—But independently of this, a sufficiently satisfactory answer to the above question may be derived from the fact that the same name, or one of the same import, (*the Memra of Jah*), was quite familiar to the Jews of Old Testament and apostolic times, and no doubt also to Gentile Christians, for that Divine person who had been from the beginning revealed as *God*, and the *angel* of God—“The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the Holy One of Israel”—the Mediator, also, and “the Messenger of the covenant.” Judging from

the *Targums*, the Jews seem to have been rather too familiar with this expression than otherwise, and to have sometimes used it, therefore, without a very definite or distinct meaning—used it as we might use the emphatical personal pronoun, *himself*; and thus in some cases it becomes difficult to ascertain whether they designed to mark by it a distinction of personality in the Godhead, or merely to mean God (the person spoken of) *himself*. In other cases, however, there is no such difficulty—the Word of God being clearly distinguished from God himself, and yet spoken of as a Divine person. It would be easy to give examples of this; but I deem it unnecessary. It is more important to remark that several instances of the same thing,—the use of the expression “The Word of God” for a Divine person—are to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures:—In Gen. xv. 1 it is said, “After these things THE WORD OF THE LORD came to Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham; I AM THY SHIELD, AND THY EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD:” (ver. 6) “And he believed in THE LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”—In 2 Sam. vii. 21 David in his prayer before the Lord says, “For THY WORD’S sake and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things;” but in 1 Chron. xvii. 19 the same sentiment is expressed thus: “O Lord, for THY SERVANT’S sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness:” and we know that “the Servant of the Lord” is quite a common designation of Christ in the Old Testament. (Isa. xlii. 1; xliii. 10; xlix. 6; lii. 13; liii. 11; comp. Matt. xii. 18; Phil. ii. 7.) And so, in other cases.—As to the question *How the title “the Word of God” may have originated, as the designation of a Divine person?*—an antiquarian, or curious, rather than a practical, or useful question—the less said, perhaps, the better. It is plainly analogous to the other expression “the Wisdom of God”—understood of the same Divine person—given in the Proverbs; but as to the reason of either or both of these names, the challenge contained in the same book seems to be peculiarly applicable, “What is his name, and what is his Son’s name, if thou canst tell?”

In connection with the subject of this note it may be remarked that it would be a useful task for any careful student of the Scriptures, who desired more abundant evidence that Jesus Christ, in his pre-existing nature and condition, was the Revealed God of the Old Testament Scriptures, to seek out all the instances in which "the Lord God," there spoken of, is identified with Christ by the inspired writers of the New Testament. The author has pointed out some of these instances in the Fifth Lecture (Prop. iii.), but they are more numerous than is commonly supposed; and, were the corresponding passages in the Old and New Testaments, containing them, set side by side in parallel columns, they would furnish such a proof of the supreme divinity of our blessed Lord, presented to both the eye and the mind of the sincere inquirer, as could not easily be gainsaid or resisted. A few instances are here given as a specimen:—

Gen. i. 1.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

John i. 1-3.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Exod. iii. 14.

And God said unto Moses I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

John viii. 58.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I AM.

Exod. xv. 17.

Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in: (Isa. viii. 8) Thy land, O IMMANUEL; (vii. 14) Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL.

Matt. i. 22, 23.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name IMMANUEL; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.

Exod. xix. 17.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God: (ver. 18) And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord

Acts vii. 38.

This is he (Moses) that was in the church in the wilderness with (between) the angel that spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and our fathers;

(Jehovah) descended upon it in fire: (ver. 20) And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinal, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. (Chap. xx. 1, 2) And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, etc.

Hag. ii. 6.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, etc.

Num. xxi. 5, 6.

And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water.—And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. (Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18) And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their hearts, by asking meat for their lust, etc.

Compare also *Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18,*

Isa. vi. 1-10,

Isa. viii. 13, 14,

Isa. xlii. 6,

who received the lively oracles to give unto us. (Heb. xii. 18-26,) Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, etc. But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, etc., and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things, etc. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake (him speaking) on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him (speaking) from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

1 Cor. x. 9.

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

with *Eph. iv. 7-10.*

John xii. 29-41.

1 Pet. ii. 7, 8; iii. 15.

Rev. xxi. 13, 16.

NOTE VII., p. 220.

Objections to the Doctrine of the Substitution and Sacrifice of Christ.

The railing accusations against the doctrine of the substitution and sacrifice of Christ, quoted in the Sixth Discourse,

are those of a Deist of the last century, a Socinian of this, a late much-applauded preacher of the English Church, and a living professor at Oxford. It would be difficult for the reader, I daresay, to determine 'which is which,' or which is worst.—I have no design of entering into any formal vindication of the doctrine in opposition to these accusations, or to others of similar character found in other quarters. I do not recollect any passage of Scripture in which the idea of the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty is vindicated by argument as consistent with justice, or worthy of God; though, possibly, this would be questioned in apostolic days as well as in ours. The inspired men contented themselves with stating the doctrine, in plain words, as a matter of fact, supporting it by other scriptures, and so leaving it to produce its own impression on the hearts of their believing readers. They would as soon, I suspect, have thought of vindicating by reasoning the doctrine that "light is sweet, and that it is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the sun," as that the voluntary substitution of the Son of God in the room of guilty men, is an idea unspeakably worthy of God, and glorious for its holiness, its justice, and its benignity. Had any one reviled the doctrine in this point of view, they would have traced his enmity to it, I fear, to a source which argument cannot reach, and deemed it about as profitable to begin to reason for the pleasantness of *light* with that expert rationalist who is reported to have once said

"To thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams."

Almost the only use of argument on this subject is, for the sake of others, to strip off the misrepresentation and expose the mischief contained in such statements of the enemies of the Cross of Christ, as those which we have quoted. In attempting very summarily to do this, let us begin with the last of them, the question of Professor Jowett,—a man who, having sworn, and still professing, to maintain the Calvinistic Articles of the Church of England, seems to think it no

scandal or disgrace to employ his learning and influence in throwing contempt on the truth embodied in them. The question, "In what did this satisfaction (of Christ) consist? Was it that God was angry, and needed to be propitiated *like some heathen deity of old?*" is the first of a string of questions by which he endeavours to subvert the very foundations of the doctrine of the atonement, and confound all truth on the subject of man's relations to God. His own answer to the question is, "Such a thought refutes itself by the very indignation which it calls up in the human bosom." But why does the thought call up this indignation? Solely on account of the unwarrantable (not to say blasphemous) light in which he himself has put the thought, by comparing God's anger against sin, and the necessity of a propitiation, with the ideas of heathens on these subjects. The sting lies entirely in the words "*like some heathen deity of old;*" and if these be left out, it is impossible to see why the thought of God's being angry with sin, and exacting a penalty or a propitiation for it, should call up any "indignation in the human bosom," or any other feelings but those which it is designed to call up—the hatred of sin, the fear of God's anger, and confidence in his holiness and justice and truth. If God was *not* angry with sin (*i.e.* not determined to punish it), then he would neither be a holy nor a just being; for sin both dishonours him, and destroys his works. If he *was* angry with it, and yet passed by it without a propitiation (*i.e.* without punishing it—without displaying his anger, either on the sinner or his substitute), then he would not be true—he would be a deceitful being; he would mislead his own unfallen creatures, and involve the whole creation in ruin: horrid thought! he would himself become the author and encourager of sin.

It is no argument against the scriptural idea of a propitiation that heathens had wrong notions on the subject, and attributed to their deities the cruel and sanguinary dispositions of demons. For though Professor Jowett speaks of heathen deities as *real* existences, that does not make them so; they had existence only in the dark minds of their

votaries ; and as good an argument against the being of God, as against the idea of atonement, might be derived from the false and abominable notions of heathens on the subject. Professor Jowett is accused of semi-panteism, which is much the same thing with semi-atheism (if such a thing be possible) ; but if *his* bosom be filled with indignation at the thought of God being angry with sin and sinners, and requiring a propitiation before he can forgive them, perhaps there might be no great harm in his becoming a full and avowed atheist, and throwing up his preferments, and his connection with any Christian church. His retaining these while renouncing the truth which he has sworn to defend, can hardly fail to "call up indignation in" every honourable "bosom," and ought to make himself ashamed. He says (apparently with a sneer), "Gladly, if it were possible, we would rest in the thing signified (by the terms 'sacrifice,' 'satisfaction,' etc.), and know only 'Jesus Christ and him crucified.' But, in the present day, we can no longer 'receive the kingdom of God as little children.'" Professor Jowett should have spoken this only for himself and his coadjutors. But it may perhaps afford him and his class some consolation to be reminded that "little children" have sometimes received the doctrine of the atonement in the same spirit with him. The following relates to a remarkable "little child."

"I well remember, when about *seven or eight* years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the death of the Son of God*. After sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son when he could not revenge himself in any other way ; and . . . I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had anything of childish levity ; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had of God—(the same as Mr Jowett's idea of Him)—who was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under the necessity of doing it."—*Age of Reason by Thomas Paine*.

"*Tempora mutantur* : " What was "sixty years since" the profane language of the proscribed outlaw, the enemy

alike of 'thrones and altars,' is now, it would appear, fit for being uttered from the pulpits of the Established Church of England, and the professorial chairs of her Universities!

The reader will perceive that the above extract contains the *first* objection quoted in the Discourse, (p. 217,) so that we need not mention its authorship. But it is worthy of his notice that there is a closer agreement still between the "little child" Tom Paine's thought, and that of the *second* quotation in the Discourse, than between Paine's objection and Jowett's. That second quotation—about "the ungoverned rage of Saul, missing his stroke at David, who has offended, and in disappointed fury dashing his javelin at his own son Jonathan,"—seems as if designed to bring out and illustrate fully the very thought of Paine,—the illustration at the same time going, in reckless bitterness, beyond the text. And from whom is it taken? From a late highly popular preacher of the Church of England, "the Rev. F. W. Robertson, M.A., incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Brighton." The popularity of the preacher and the wide dissemination of his writings afford too melancholy a reason for noticing his fierce accusations against the Scripture doctrine of the Cross of Christ. That which we have quoted is by no means the worst. Speaking of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and intending apparently to describe the Calvinistic view of it, he says—(The Italics are ours)—

"It has been represented as if the majesty of Law demanded a victim: and so as it glutted its insatiate thirst, one victim would do as well as another—the purer and the more innocent the better. It has been exhibited as if Eternal Love resolved in fury to strike, and so as He had His blow, it mattered not whether it fell on the whole world, or on the precious blood of his own chosen Son. Unitarianism has represented the Scriptural view in this way: *or, rather, perhaps, we should say, it has been so represented to Unitarians—and from a view so horrible, no wonder if Unitarianism has recoiled.* But it is not our fault if some *blind defenders of the truth* have converted the self-devotion of Love into a Brahminical sacrifice. If the work of redemption be defended by parallels drawn from the most atrocious records and principles of Heathenism, let not the fault be laid upon the Bible. We disclaim that as well as they. It makes God a Calaphas.—It makes him adopt the words of Calaphas in the sense of Calaphas. It represents him in terms which better describe the ungoverned rage of Saul," etc.—*Sermons preached at Trinity Chapel, Brighton. First Series*, p. 155.

The reader cannot fail to mark the dexterous manner in which the writer introduces Unitarians and Unitarianism, as if his quarrel was with them, and not with those whom he calls "blind defenders of the truth." The truth is, Unitarianism, or something very like it, peeps out in the extract in other ways than by sympathy with Unitarians in "recoiling" from the doctrine of the substitution of Christ. For if Christ was the "chosen Son" of God—His Son by election or adoption merely—then he was no otherwise the Son of God than every believer is. But this by the way: the whole paragraph is manifestly a vehement—a ferocious assault on the great scriptural sentiment, "*It pleased the Lord to bruise him: He hath put him to grief. Awake O Sword against my Shepherd, and against the Man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: Smite the shepherd. For God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" This is obvious, if from nothing else, from the reference made to Caiaphas. There can be no doubt that, in reference to the death of our blessed Lord, God adopted the words of Caiaphas, so far, in the sense of Caiaphas; or rather, God employed Caiaphas to express, in words, His own great counsel in reference to the death of Christ. We have the authority of the inspired apostle for this, and to refuse it would be to contradict God himself. And I know not if there be another passage in Scripture from which the literally substitutionary character of the death of Christ may be more forcibly or conclusively argued than that which is thus referred to. (John xi. 49-52.)

Let us look at the matter: Caiaphas, sitting at the head of the supreme council of the Jewish nation, consulting *professedly* for the safety and welfare of the nation, proposed that Jesus should "die for (in the room of) the people, and that the whole nation perish not." He proposed therefore a real, literal *substitution*: destruction was to come on Jesus, that it might be averted from the nation. Well, says the Spirit of inspiration, virtually, 'God, sitting at the head of the supreme council of the universe, consulting for the preservation and well-being of men, purposed the same thing:

he purposed that "Jesus should die *for* (in the room of) that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also (by his death) he should gather together the children of God scattered abroad."—This was the great counsel of God in reference to the death of Christ, and it was based on the same principle of substitution as the counsel of Caiaphas—death coming on *one* that it might be averted from *others*. So far therefore "God adopted the words of Caiaphas in the sense of Caiaphas."

But this is not all: not only is the principle embraced in the two counsels the same, it is applied also to the same individual, and in the same way. For,—taking it at present for granted (as we have endeavoured to show in a previous note) that Caiaphas knew and believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and the Son of God; and keeping in mind also that both he and all the Jewish council knew perfectly well (as all the gospel narratives show) that Jesus was an entirely innocent man—perfectly free from any fault which they at least could charge against him, while they and their people were guilty,—what Caiaphas consciously proposed was just what the Spirit of prophecy had long before, and in many ways, foretold—"That MESSIAH should be cut off, but not for himself;" and that in his vicarious death these three remarkable features should be exhibited—*one* dying for *many*; the *innocent* dying for the *guilty*; *God* dying for *Man*.—Now it cannot be denied, without denying Scripture, that, *so far*, there was not merely an analogy, or remarkable agreement, between the counsel of Caiaphas and the purpose of God, but an absolute identity. For it was the purpose of God, not merely that Messiah should die, "not for himself," but also that his death should exhibit the self-same features—the same characteristics of a vicarious death—*one* dying in the room of *many*; the *innocent* dying in the room of the *guilty*; *God* dying in the room of *Man*. We need not adduce Scripture proofs that this was the purpose of the Eternal Father in reference to his Blessed Son. The proofs are exceedingly abundant,¹ but it is unnecessary to

¹ See Matt. xx. 28; xxvi. 28; Heb. ii. 10; Rev. vii. 9-14.—2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; ii. 22-24; iii. 18.—2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6-8; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

quote them. The truth cannot be gainsaid by those who reverence the word of God. The Spirit of truth has witnessed it; a spirit of falsehood alone can doubt it.—To this extent, therefore, God may be truly said to have “adopted the words of Caiaphas in the sense of Caiaphas.” He purposed to act on the same principle of *substitution*; and he purposed that that principle should be applied to the *same person*, and, in the threefold manner specified above, *in the same way*—one for many, the innocent for the guilty, God for man.

But does this “make God a Caiaphas,” as this writer has it? Does it make *him* chargeable with the sin—the lawlessness and cruelty of Caiaphas? “God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?” God may be said to have “adopted the words” of devils “in the sense” of devils; for when they proclaimed Christ “the Son of God, and the Holy One of God,” did they not declare divine truth? And did not God himself, virtually at least, proclaim the very same truth when he said, “This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased?” But what arrant or blasphemous nonsense would it be to say that this made God a devil, or identified his character with that of devils!—God may be said to have “adopted” the murderous act of the Jews and Romans in “crucifying the Lord of glory.” He foresaw it, and determined to permit it; or, if this writer’s word be insisted on, he “adopted” it as the way in which his own holy counsel should be accomplished (Acts ii. 23; iii. 18; iv. 27, 28); but did this make God chargeable with *their* sin? Did it make him a murderer? This author was evidently bound, in consistency, to say so; and if he believed it, he was bound also, in honour, to renounce Scripture which asserts these things of God, and along with Scripture to renounce the Thirty-nine Articles, his status and living as a minister of the Church of England, and all the worldly influence and honour and emolument which accrued to him from his connection with that Church. He ought to have become not a Unitarian dissenter merely, but an avowed infidel or atheist.

We trust that it is hardly necessary here to point out to

the intelligent reader *how* God could thus “adopt the words of Caiaphas in the sense of Caiaphas,” and yet not be chargeable with his sin. In bringing such a horrid charge or insinuation against “the Holy One of Israel,” the reviler should have proved that Christ stood in the same relation to the two parties—*God* and *Caiaphas*; that *they* had the same *motives and spirit* in purposing his death; and that *the end in view*, in the two cases, was the same, or possessed of the same moral character. It is by these and such like things, and not merely by the literal *sense of the words*, that the moral complexion of the two counsels and the moral character of the two counsellors are to be determined.—Now in these respects the thought of God and that of Caiaphas were diametrically opposed. The one was *light*, the other *darkness*; the one breathed the spirit of heavenly love, the other that of hellish malignity; the one counsel was the oracle of God, the other the oracle of the Wicked One. For let the reader carefully observe and ponder the following elements of opposition in the two counsels: (1st.) What Caiaphas proposed was a *compulsory* substitution of the innocent and divine Saviour in the room of a guilty people. He had no thought of asking or obtaining the consent of Jesus to the substitution proposed, but only of seizing Him by force or fraud and putting Him to the death. What he planned was a judicial murder of unexampled atrocity—the most monstrous act of lawlessness and oppression which any creature—any man at least—ever had the opportunity of proposing or perpetrating. But what God purposed was a *voluntary* substitution. At His “council-table” His own beloved Son was one of the Counsellors; and he freely, cheerfully, offered himself to die for guilty men.—Again (2d.) The ruling motive and spirit in the counsel of Caiaphas were *selfishness and spite*. The good of the Jewish people—the preservation of the nation—was only a secondary matter with him and his fellow-counsellors. It was perhaps only a cover of pretence. The true objects they had in view were, avowedly, the preservation of their own worldly and selfish interests, and the gratification of their long-cherished enmity to Jesus:—“It is expedient

(i.e. profitable) *for us* (the rulers) that one man die for the people." But in the counsel of a Three-one God, love—pure, disinterested, condescending compassion and love—for guilty, lost men, was the ruling motive, the actuating spirit. So far as the motive or spirit was concerned, the counsel of God was not, 'It is profitable *for Us* that one man die for the people,' but, 'It is profitable *for them* that one *of Us* die for the people.' Finally (3d.) The damnable proposal of Caiaphas was "to do evil that good might come"—to do immeasurable *moral evil*, that a very mean, temporary, selfish, *material good* might come. But the ever blessed purpose of God was to *do good that evil might be for ever put away*. He contemplated the most magnificent of all holy, just, and good achievements which time has witnessed, or which eternity itself can ever witness, that by means of it evil—everlasting evil—sin and all its bitter fruits—might be put away, and put away for ever, from a holy and redeemed creation. His object was "TO FINISH TRANSGRESSION, AND MAKE AN END OF SIN, AND MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY, AND BRING IN AN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS."—How opposite then, in these respects, were the counsel of Caiaphas and that of God! How far was God from becoming "a Caiaphas!" How evidently, on the other hand, are the overruling power and wisdom of God to be seen in this matter, in his making the wickedest thoughts, words, and actions of the wickedest of men, to fulfil His own holy and benignant purposes—"making the wrath of man to praise him, and restraining the remainder thereof." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

I have dwelt the longer on the statements of this writer, both because of the wide diffusion and great popularity of his writings, and because of the exceeding deleteriousness of the poison, mixed with much good and recommended by great eloquence, which these writings contain. He seems also to have belonged to a class of popular English preachers, who, imbued with German rationalism and pantheism, are

labouring, and not without success, to introduce "another gospel, which is not another"—a mode of preaching Christ which leaves out the Cross of Christ, and which must soon lead, if it has not already led, to the denial of his divinity, the renunciation of the authority of Scripture, and the obliteration of all that is peculiar and precious in Christianity. If the reader ask what these "Anglican Theologians" put in the place of the Cross, or of the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God for guilty men, I must answer that I cannot pretend to tell him. I have tried to comprehend the language of Jowett and Maurice and Robertson and others of this class, on the design and doctrine of the death of Christ, but I have been unable to do so to my own satisfaction; and I cannot therefore undertake to interpret it to others. I shall quote a few of their shortest and plainest-looking *scripta*, and leave the reader to judge for himself of the meaning:—Jowett says, very oracularly,

"The death of Christ is not a sacrifice in the Levitical sense; but what we mean by the word sacrifice, is the death of Christ." Again, more categorically: "Men are afraid of something; they wish to give away something: they feel themselves bound by something; the fear is done away, the gift offered, the obligation fulfilled in Christ. Such fears and desires can no more occupy their souls; they are free to lead a better life; they are at the end of the old world, and at the beginning of a new one." Again: "Not the sacrifice, nor the satisfaction, nor the ransom, but the greatest moral act ever done in this world—the act, too, of one in our own likeness—is the assurance to us that God in Christ is reconciled to the world."—*Ep. of St Paul*, etc., vol. ii., pp. 477, etc.

If the reader can make any tolerable sense out of this vague, mysterious, oracular jargon—good and well: but I only ask him to imagine how it would sound in the ear of a self-convicted, trembling sinner, in comparison with the plain authoritative declarations of those inspired men whom this learned '*Greek*' pretends to criticise and cashier: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood,

we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved through his life." (Gal. iii. 13; Rom. v. 6-9).

The Rev. F. D. Maurice, after laboriously but *not* luminously stating and arguing for a number of principles, which are far from being a fair exhibition of the "first principles of the oracles of God" on this subject, thus sums up his argument, and gives his definition of the atonement:—

"Supposing all these principles gathered together; supposing the Father's will to be a will to all good, the Son of God, being one with Him, and Lord of man, to obey and fulfil in our flesh that will by entering into the lowest condition into which men had fallen through their sin;—supposing this man to be, for this reason, an object of continual complacency to His Father, and that complacency to be fully drawn out by the Death of the Cross; is not this, in the highest sense, Atonement? Is not the true, sinless root of Humanity revealed; is not God in Him reconciled to man? May not that reconciliation be proclaimed as a Gospel to all men? Is not the Cross the meeting point between man and man, between man and God? Is not this meeting point what men, in all times and places, have been seeking for? Did any find it till God had declared it?"—*Theol. Essays*, p. 147.

What all this again means, we know not, save that it is designed to exclude the ideas of the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty, and of his bearing the punishment of their sin. For, says the author, "One who appears as the actual representative of Humanity, cannot be the formal substitute for it:" why, he says not. We had imagined that representation and substitution often meant the same thing. Again, "Christ satisfied the Father by presenting the image of his own holiness and love,"—and "how, then, can we tolerate for an instant that notion of God which would represent Him as satisfied by the punishment of sin, not by the purity and graciousness of the Son?"—Christ, then, was not a substitute for sinners; nor was his death the punishment of sin. Why then did that death, and all the unutterable anguish which accompanied it, take place? Why did it "please the Lord to bruise him, to crush him with sufferings?" Why was his Father's complacency in him "fully drawn out by the death of the cross?" Was it because God delights in suffering for its own sake? and that therefore the sufferings of his own

Son, "the representative of Humanity," were especially gratifying to him? The thought seems too awful—too forbidding to be entertained. Yet what else to make of the above representation of these sufferings of Christ—inflicted by the hand of God, or only permitted by him,—when not the punishment of sin, and therefore not necessary for the satisfaction of justice, and the vindication of law, and the exercise of mercy, we know not. And what then must the Cross of Christ, in this view of it, become? Alas! instead of being the "meeting point" of God and man, or man and man, we fear it must become the most terrible, the most repulsive point of time or space. Instead of being a fountain of light, it would become the very focus of darkness. Instead of radiating love and peace and joy over the rational creation, it would emit only lurid gleams of terror and dismay. For then God would be seen inflicting or permitting unspeakable evil without adequate cause, and even delighting without reason in the unspeakable agonies of his own innocent and spotless Son.

The theory of the Rev. F. W. Robertson as to the sufferings of Christ seems still more strange and startling than either of these. I can only place together a few of the salient points of that theory:—

"Punishment is of two kinds: the penalty which follows ignorant transgression, and the chastisement which ensues upon wilful disobedience. The first of these is called imputed guilt, the second is actual guilt.—Christ came into collision with the world's evil, and he bore the penalty of that daring. He approached the whirling wheel, and was torn in pieces. He laid His hand upon the cockatrice's den, and its fangs pierced Him.—The Redeemer bore imputed sin.—Law is the Being of God—Consider what Law is, and then the idea of bloody vengeance passes away altogether from the Sacrifice. It is not 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth,' in the sanguinary spirit of the old retaliatory legislation. It is the eternal impossibility of violating that law of the universe whereby penalty is annexed to transgression, and must fall, either laden with curse, or rich in blessing."—*Sermons*, etc. First series, pp. 160-163.

If this mean anything, it appears to be unrelieved, unmitigated pantheism. If "Law be the Being of God," then God is not a *person* but a *principle*; and if "then" the idea of divine vengeance or retribution on account of sin "passes away," then, necessarily, the ideas of the love

or mercy of God, and of forgiveness of sin, pass away also. Law has no love, no mercy, no forgiveness. "Law moves on," as the author says, "its majestic course irresistible." "If God's chosen Son violates Law, and throws himself from the pinnacle, He dies. If you resist a law in its eternal march, the universe crushes you, that is all." And that, accordingly, appears to have been *all* in Christ's case. 'He resisted or violated a law (for "he bore imputed sin;" and "imputed guilt is the penalty which follows ignorant transgression"), and the universe crushed him.' Strange doctrine! the Creator and Lawgiver of the universe ignorantly transgressed his own law, and was crushed! And this is the "darkness visible"—the "confusion worse confounded" that these popular preachers would have us to accept, partly at least, in the place of the glorious truths, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life;" and that "Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (John iii. 16; Eph. v. 2; Heb. ix. 28).

Before concluding this note, Channing's malignant caricature of the doctrine of Christ's substitution, as quoted in the Discourse, might have been noticed: "That the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, has erected a gallows in the midst of the universe, and publicly executed upon it, in the room of the offenders, an infinite being, the partaker of his own supreme divinity."—There is much in this language savouring of vulgarity as well as malignity; but we pass over these things, to notice an objection suggested by it, which Channing evidently rested in as his chief argument against the doctrine of the atonement. He continually brings forward on this subject, and endeavours to ridicule the sentiment that 'Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinite being; and therefore deserves infinite punishment, or demands an infinitesatisfaction.' Now, whether this language

of some orthodox divines be in all respects unexceptionable, I shall not seek to determine; but there can be no doubt that it is intended to express a sound and rational sentiment,—namely, that any sin, unremedied or unpunished, is fitted to do incalculable mischief—infinite evil in the universe, or among the creatures of God: and I only remark, that if any Socinian or other enemy of the Cross of Christ can disprove this, he ought immediately, instead of quibbling about words, to set about the demonstration that the evil of sin is *finite*. We cannot take his simple *ipse dixit* on the subject, ‘that the “sinfulness of sin” is to be measured by the littleness of the law-breaker, rather than by the greatness of the Lawgiver;’ and in the absence of any other standard measure of guilt, we might perhaps arrive at the truth by discovering the limits of the mischief which *unremedied* sin is fitted to produce among the rational creatures of God. And surely, if there be such limits, our would-be *rational Christians* must be able to point them out! Let them measure, then, the dimensions of the ruin which the least possible violation of the Divine moral law would entail on such a world as this, or such a universe as that in the midst of which man is placed. Let them tell how far this “letting out of waters” would go, and where it would *of itself* stop—how far this kindling of a conflagration would spread, and where among the works of God it would *of itself* die out, or be self-extinguished. For until then, we shall think it safer to measure the guilt of sin both by the infinite holiness and the infinite grandeur of the Lawgiver of the universe, than by our own ignorance and self-love; and we shall think it wiser to rest in the Cross of Christ—the obedience unto death, in the room of the guilty, of one “who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God”—as God’s way of at once exhibiting the evil of sin, and taking it away,—of both condemning it and remedying it,—displaying its immeasurable guilt, and yet exhausting its unfathomable curse,—than to repose ourselves on crude and self-willed theories either as to the general mercy of God, or as to the inherent virtue of man, or as to the *finite* evil of sin.

Addenda, Second Edition.

In making some additional observations on the subject of the foregoing note, we would remark that the system of the "modern Anglican Neologians," seems to be based on, or to lead to, such paradoxes as these: 'God is a Father, but not a Judge; sin is a personal offence against him, but not a violation of law,—a great evil separating from God, but not a crime against his government demanding punishment; law, indeed, as applied to moral and spiritual matters, is "a figment;" and therefore the death of Christ, though a sacrifice, and influential in some undefined and undefineable way in making up the breach between God and man, was not a satisfaction to justice—the penalty of law—the vicarious death of the innocent substitute in place of the guilty sinner.'

"Was it (says Professor Jowett) that there was a debt due to God which must be paid ere its consequences could be done away? But even a man's debt may be freely forgiven, nor could the after-payment change our sense of the offender's wrong: we are arguing about what is moral and spiritual from what is legal, or, more strictly, from a shadow and figment of law."—*St Paul's Ep. etc.*, Vol. II. p. 472.

Now if sin, as Scripture says, be "the transgression of law"—lawlessness,—it must be plain that the principle of law as applied to "what is moral and spiritual" is not a "figment,"—it is a reality; God has, in other words, a moral government, and deals with sinners as a judge. The moral law of God, indeed, like the laws of nature, may be an *abstraction*. Unless when some particular revelation of law is referred to, we may properly mean by it, God himself acting as a lawgiver and judge; but this, instead of turning it into "a figment," only unfolds its reality and grandeur and power, and constrains us to feel its unchangeable supremacy. Moral law in this view is the only security for the order and well-being of the rational creation of God; and therefore also the punishment of sin, which is involved in it, and inseparable from it, is the safeguard of that creation. To suppose that God can dispense with that punishment, or pass by sin without inflicting on it a penalty

corresponding to its demerit, is in other words to suppose him indifferent to the well-being of his creatures, and ready to yield them up to unrestrained anarchy and misery. Would this become the relation or heart of a Father? Is this supposable in the case of Him who "is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all?" "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The truth is, the character of Father necessarily involves that of Judge; and when sin enters among his children, love to the rest imperatively calls for retribution on the transgressor, and wrath—"wrath to the uttermost"—on the irreclaimable. Nor does this, as Jowett alleges, "introduce a moral principle superior to God, just as in the Grecian mythology fate and necessity are superior to Jupiter." The moral principle, so to call it, which requires this mode of acting on the part of God, does not lie in "the nature of things," but, in the nature of God himself. There was no "impossibility" of his acting differently had he been a different kind of being. It is solely because he is a holy, just, and good being that, in his character of Supreme Magistrate, he *must* punish sin,—he *must* protect the innocent. It is easy to say indeed that "even a man's debt may be freely forgiven." But it can be so only by the man himself to whom it is due. One man cannot forgive the debt due to another man; nor can he even forgive that which is due to himself, if any other has an interest in it along with himself. The loftiest sovereign or judge cannot righteously cancel a debt or remit a claim due to himself, if his subjects as well as himself have a legal or moral right to have it exacted. His doing so would proclaim him an oppressor—himself the greatest violator of justice and law; and it would bring upon him the execration and contempt of every lover of justice—every friend of honourable and upright conduct. Distrust and rebellion also would be its native fruits.

Now the Sovereign of the universe is in this position. Obedience, or, failing it, the punishment of disobedience, is a debt due to him. But it is not due to himself *alone*. It is due to his government, that is, to his obedient subjects as

represented by him, and having all their interests and well-being in his hand. How could God forgive the debt of the sinner in so far as *they* were concerned? Only by exacting some equivalent—something that would secure *their* interests, and *his own* glory as connected therewith, as well as, or better than, the sinner's punishment would have done: *i.e.* by an adequate atonement. And be it observed that, while God as the Sovereign and Judge of the universe has thus maintained the honour of his character and government, and the rights of his holy creatures, he has at the same time forgiven *freely* the sinner's debt, nay more than forgiven it, in so far as it was due to himself *personally and exclusively considered*. For has he not given out of his "own proper good"—out of the infinite treasures which belonged to himself alone—over which creation had no claim—the price of man's redemption? In giving his Son for this, he has done more than remit the debt due to *himself*; he has first remitted it, in so far as due to himself *alone*, and then *himself* paid it in so far as due to others, or due to himself as the guardian of the rights of others. Thus while acting as a righteous Judge, he has also been a merciful and forgiving Father. He has been both rigidly just, and ineffably generous. "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other." "God is just and yet the justifier of the ungodly."

Were it not too melancholy to be amusing, it might provoke a smile to observe the strange theories and fantastic representations to which writers of this new theological school are obliged to betake themselves in order to banish from the Christian system the proper idea of an atonement, or of God as a judge, and Christ as bearing the punishment of sin in the room of the guilty. One of the most extraordinary of these theories to which our attention has been directed is that of Bushnell, an American writer of great eloquence and verbosity, whose very wordiness, we suspect, has concealed from himself, as it may do from others, what appears to be the plain result of his argumentation. He has written nearly a hundred pages of octavo letterpress

to get quit of the proper idea of the atonement of Christ, by showing *first*, that the life and death of Christ were designed—designed by God—to produce a *false* impression on the minds of men,—an impression of the sacredness and dignity of law, without which it would not have been safe to forgive sin freely ; and then showing *secondly*, that it is natural for men, having obtained this impression, to give it an objective reality, by thinking and speaking of the death of Christ as an actual sacrifice for sin,—projecting their inward, subjective impression in some outward, objective form, “as if it had some effect on the law or on God”—which it had not,—and so “representing Christ as our sacrifice, sin-offering, atonement, or sprinkling of blood.” Thus, as two negatives make an affirmative, two falsehoods seem, in this argument, to make a truth ! and thus the statements of Scripture about Christ as “the propitiation for our sins,”—as “having redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,” and such like, may be accounted for and explained ; for this language, the writer contends, it would not be proper or safe to discard from the public preaching of Christ !!

I would not willingly mistake or misrepresent the intentions of this or any other writer, and I have honestly given, therefore, what appears to me the marrow of his doctrine of *vicarious atonement*, or as he himself describes it, “*a more artistic representation* of the subject matter of the common Protestant doctrine.” But lest I should be supposed to have misunderstood him, I give the following summary of the first part of his theory in his own words :—

“My doctrine is summarily this ; that, excluding all thoughts of a penal quality in the life and death of Christ, or of any divine abhorrence to sin, exhibited by sufferings laid upon his person ; also, dismissing, as an assumption too high for us, the opinion that the death of Christ is designed for some governmental effect on the moral empire of God in other worlds,—excluding points like these, and regarding everything done by him as done for expression before us, and thus for effect in us,—he does produce an impression in our minds of the essential sanctity of God’s law and character, which it was needful to produce, and without which any proclamation of pardon would be dangerous—any attempt to subdue and reconcile us to God ineffectual. Meantime, it may comfort some to add, that he does by *implication*, or inferentially, express in all that he does the profoundest abhorrence to sin ; for, if he will endure so much to re-sanctify his law, and renew us in the spirit of

it, how intensely signified is the abhorrence of his nature to the transgression of his law—more intensely than it would be even by the punishment of us all.”—*God in Christ, etc.* By H. Bushnell, p. 215.

It is plain that since “the essential sanctity of God’s law and character” did not, according to this writer, *require* the sufferings of Christ in order to the forgiveness of sin,—since sin is forgiven *freely*, or altogether irrespective of these sufferings,—the impression produced by them on the minds of men, as to that “sanctity,” must be a *false* impression. The sufferings of Christ, if not necessary to the vindication of the law and character of God in passing by sin, can give us no true impression—no trustworthy information—at all, in reference to that law and character. The one has no certain relation to the other. And though the author adds, for the “comfort” of “some,” that they may draw an inference from the one to the other—from the sufferings of Christ to the “divine abhorrence of sin”—this inference, too, must be illogical and false, for how can these sufferings bear such an inference, when “all thoughts of any divine abhorrence to sin, as exhibited by them,” are excluded?

To support what we have said of the second part of this theory, it is only necessary to quote the following sentences:—

“Now, in all these terms (representing Christ as our sacrifice, sin-offering, atonement, or sprinkling of blood) we represent a work as done outwardly for us, which is really done in us, and through impressions prepared in us, but the more adequately and truly still, for the reason that we have it in mystic forms (derived from the Jewish law) before us. These forms are the objective equivalents of our subjective impressions. Indeed, our impressions have their life and power in and under these forms. Neither let it be imagined that we only happen to seize upon these images of sacrifice, atonement, and blood, because they are at hand. They are prepared, as *God’s form of art*, for the representation of Christ and his work; and if we refuse to let them pass into this form, we have no mould of thought that can fitly represent him. And when he is thus represented, we are to understand that he is our sacrifice and atonement,—that by his blood we have remission, *not in any speculative sense, but as in art.*”—*God in Christ*, p. 232.

By “any speculative sense” here the author seems to mean a sense in which the representation of Christ and his work may be contemplated as containing doctrine,—as revealing objective truth,—that representation being designed “as in art” only to convey more fitly the expression of that which is within us.

Professor Jowett's method of taking the kernel out of the language of Scripture on this subject, leaving us only the shell, though hardly so bold as that of the American writer, comes nearly to the same thing in the end.

Bushnell makes use of what he calls "divine art" for the purpose; Jowett is content to have recourse to human error and invention. Accordingly, the latter, after telling us how, in all ages and in every country where Christianity has been preached, "the Old Testament has ever been taking the place of the New, the law of the gospel—the outward and temporal of the spiritual and eternal;" how the apostles as Jews, "being unable to lay aside their first nature, or divest themselves at once of Jewish modes of expression," naturally fell into the mistake of thinking of Christ as a sacrifice and atonement for sin; how, in the Epistle to the Hebrews this illusory "reflection of the New Testament in the Old is most distinctly brought before us;" how "the notion of sacrifice gained a new foundation in the after history of the Church and the world," more especially in the Romish mass and priesthood; and how "an additional support for the doctrine of a sacrifice or satisfaction is found in heathen sacrifices, which, like the Jewish, are viewed only by the light of their Christian fulfilment,"—goes on to explain to us what all this really means—what truth and spirituality lie at the bottom of all:—

"Heathen and Jewish sacrifices," says he, "rather show us what the sacrifice of Christ was not than what it was. They are the dim, vague, rude, (may we not say?) almost barbarous *expression* of that want in human nature which has received satisfaction in Him only."—"Nature and Scripture, and the still small voice of Christian feeling, give a simpler and truer explanation of the doctrine of the atonement than theories of satisfaction or the history of sacrifice,—an explanation that does not shift with the metaphysical schools of the age, which is for the heart rather than the head. Nature bids us look at the misery of the whole creation groaning and travelling together until now; Christian feeling requires only that we should cast all upon Christ, whose work the Scripture sets forth under many different figures, lest we should rest in one only. This variety is an indication of the simplicity with which we are to learn Christ. The Jewish sacrifices had many meanings and associations. Nor are these the only types under which the Mediator of the new covenant is set forth to us in Scripture. He is the sin-offering and the paschal lamb, and the priest and the temple, all in one. Out of all these, why are we to select one to be the foundation of our theological edifice? *As figures we may still use them. But*

the writings of the apostle (Paul) supply another kind of language which is not figurative, and which underlies them all; which is far more really present and lively to us than the conception of a sacrifice, and which remains within the limits of our spiritual consciousness, instead of passing beyond them. This is the spirit of which the other is the letter, the substance of which it is the form and shadow."

And then the author goes on to unfold what he deems this "spirit" and "substance" by speaking, in mysterious language, of

The Christian's "union with Christ, in all the stages of His (Christ's) existence,"—of the assurance given us by the life and death of Christ, "that God in Christ is reconciled to the world,"—of the sense of man's unprofitableness which is accompanied with an unshaken confidence in God's mercy; of which confidence, however, no account can be given; for "he who has this confidence finds the reasons of it desert Him as soon as he begins to consider them,"—and finally of the unfathomable depth of the life and death of Christ, which renders "mystery the nearest approach we can make to truth; only by indefiniteness can we avoid placing words in the place of things. We know nothing of the objective act on God's part, by which He reconciled the world to Himself, the very description of it as an act being a figure of speech; and we seem to know that we never can know anything."—*St Paul's Ep.*, vol. II, pp. 479-482.

This it must be allowed is but a lame and impotent conclusion for so learned a man to come to, after so laborious and unscrupulous an effort to raze the foundations of many generations. It explains nothing. It leaves the subject of human redemption by the death of Christ in profoundest night; for, while it confounds and rejects all the plainest language of Scripture on the subject, it gives us nothing but mystery and apologies for ignorance in its place. Yet, happily, this language of Professor Jowett contains enough of truth to overturn his own theory, and show that any view of the Christian atonement that leaves out the idea of vicarious sacrifice is unscriptural and self-contradictory. It allows, for instance, that Jewish sacrifices were types of that of Christ. If so, they must have been divinely appointed and true symbols. As the principal means by which, for so many ages, believers could reach any knowledge of the way of salvation, these types must be believed to have corresponded, in their radical idea at least, with their great antitype. Divine wisdom and truth cannot have misled the ancient church on this point. And what then must be the

radical, the fundamental idea of the *antitype*—the sacrifice of Christ? Can it be any other than that which, undeniably, was the uniform idea of the chief Jewish sacrifices,—namely the substitution of an innocent, spotless victim, in the room of the guilty sinner? Can it be any other than that Christ is our sin-offering and passover sacrificed *for us*—the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world?

We readily allow that "Jewish sacrifices had many meanings and associations;" but they were only, for this reason, the more fitted to be the "shadows" of that great sacrifice which has so many aspects and results,—and we may safely defy Professor Jowett to show any meaning or association in them which was not consistent with, or did not confirm, the radical idea of *vicarious death for sin*. We grant with equal readiness that Jewish sacrifices were not the only scriptural types of the mediator of the new covenant, or his work. We might possibly find in Scripture a greater number and variety of other types than Professor Jowett and the Anglican theologians would be willing to accept as such. But we may again safely defy both him and them to show that either any Old Testament type, or any New Testament representation of Christ and his work, is inconsistent with the idea of his propitiatory sacrifice. All of them are reconcilable with it; most of them, like the brazen serpent, and the manna, and the water from the smitten rock, were but illustrations of its manifold efficacy and results. We grant farther that Jewish sacrifices and other Old Testament types of Christ were but "figures," or as the apostle himself calls them "shadows;" but if they *were* figures, and if after the copious example of Christ and his apostles we may still use them as such (as Jowett's language allows), why ought we not to select the radical idea of these figures (so divinely sanctioned, and so long the only, or almost the only instruction on the subject given to man), as the foundation of at least that part of our "theological edifice" which embraces the atonement? That idea is, as we have said, that the innocent and spotless victim was offered up in the room of the guilty sinner. What other idea is better

fitted to be 'a foundation' than this? What other is simpler, or more definite, or more level to all capacities? What other more naturally leads on to all scriptural views of the person and character and work of Christ? What other is more rational, or attractive, or peace-bringing to the heart of a sin-burdened creation, "groaning and travailing together until now?" Proud and learned sophists may scoff at it or stumble over it; but little children and all humble souls embrace it with fervour, and wonder at it, and entrust their souls to it. This is to them the very stone which God has laid in Zion for a foundation, "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation," he that believeth in which shall not make haste. Professor Jowett says indeed that there are other ideas which are "far more really present and lively to us than the conception of a sacrifice"—a vicarious sacrifice. But when he proceeds to exhibit them he puts us off with mere mysticism and mystery. We do not deny the unfathomable depth of the mystery of the life and death of Christ. Into this "the angels desire to look." But if the Spirit of inspiration, "who searcheth all things, yea even the deep things of God," has brought up to us from that unfathomable depth a simple idea which, like a lustrous gem, radiates peaceful light on all the dark questions that have perplexed and confounded human reason—on God and his government, man and his destiny, sin and its deserts,—why should we refuse to receive it because we ourselves can never sound the depths from which divine wisdom has brought it up? Why not rather accept of it, and rejoice in it, as not only true, but as that 'very truth most sure' which He, who best knows us, knows to be both most profitable to us in our present condition of darkness and temptation, and most suitable to prepare us for the loftier and purer and more comprehensive revelations of the world of light?

THE END.

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